The NATURAL HISTORY OF A SOCIAL INSTITUTION - THE Y.W.C.A.

MARY S. SIMS

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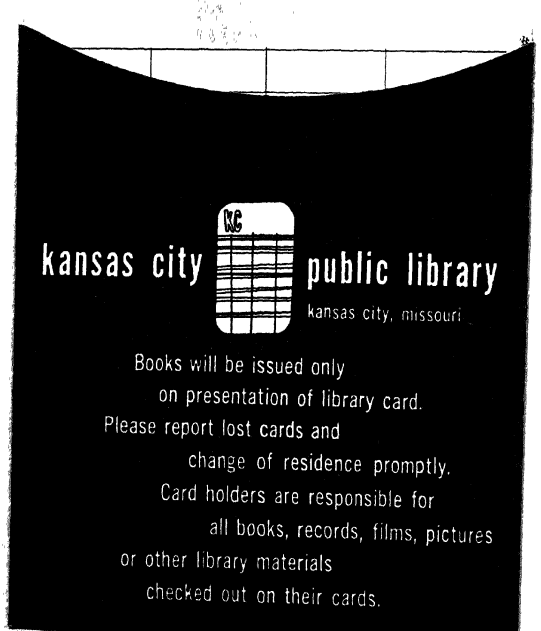
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The Natural History of a Social Institution —the Young Women's Christian Association

MARY S. SIMS

1936
THE WOMANS PRESS
NEW YORK

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CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

FOREWORD

The Problem and the Methods Used

THIS study is an attempt to discuss what actually happened to the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States of America from its beginning in 1858 to the year 1934; to show its growth and development as a social institution; to relate the general course of events within the institution itself to the wider happenings in the social, economic and religious life of the United States, particularly as it affected women; and to discover generalizations and identify concepts which may be common to social institutions or show evidences of such development.

In carrying out this study, four major difficulties were encountered. The first of these difficulties was the decision as to the method of presentation. After giving careful consideration to the topical approach as over against the chronological, the time sequence seemed of sufficient importance to attempt the use of both methods. The first three chapters, therefore, present as simply and directly as possible the major events in their chronological order in the life of the Association itself, with little related material, while the remaining chapters, taking up as separate topics the major concerns of the Young Women's Christian Association over the years, attempt to relate the work of the Association to its social setting. As is inevitable in this dual method of presentation, there is a certain amount of

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duplication. As far as possible, and consistent with maintaining clarity, this duplication has been eliminated.

The second difficulty encountered was the problem of the nature of the available sources. So far as it is possible to determine, for the early years, that is from 1858 to 1900, all the available printed material was consulted. Nevertheless, even in the comparatively small amount of material available from these early years it has been continually necessary to evaluate and select.

This early material falls roughly into two classifications: official documents consisting of the proceedings of conferences and conventions and in some cases of meetings of boards of local Associations; and unofficial material consisting very largely of articles printed in Association magazines and of reports, both typewritten and printed, of speeches, meetings and related events. From 1900 on, the amount of printed material available was very large and a selective process was necessary. Of the official records, all printed reports to and proceedings of national conventions have been used, and all other printed reports of the national organization or of sections of the organization, such as the reports of the War Work Council from 1917 to 1920. In addition, for these later years a number of unofficial documents consisting of correspondence, unpublished manuscripts, minutes of meetings, typewritten reports, as well as the official magazine—the *Association Monthly*, later the *Woman's Press*—have all been used.

As the material is all relatively recent, the question of the authenticity of the documents did not arise. In any case, if a piece of material, typewritten or printed, was without date or source, it was not used. Generally speaking, the material available has been of unequal quantity and value. In the earlier years the quantity was small, and

even so late as the period of the World War, reports and written documents are fragmentary and in some cases of doubtful accuracy. It is to be regretted that between 1915 and 1920, when no national conventions were held, records equal in value to the convention records were not kept.

As has been said above, while the question of authenticity in its simpler sense of who wrote an article and at what date seldom if ever arose, there was the more difficult question of the value of the written report or record. Just what values were uppermost in the mind of each writer and what facts or opinions were suppressed must remain in many cases uncertain.

In considering this question of credibility of sources it should be remembered, all the way through, that this book is the record of the work of an organization which was and is primarily a group of people concerned with making life worth while for others as well as for themselves, and that, particularly in the early years, this group of active leaders was a highly homogeneous and like-minded group. Moreover, a good part of their like-mindedness consisted in a particular point of view about religion and the Christian faith. To this fact, and probably also to their adherence to the general tradition of gentleness and meekness in gentlewomen, is perhaps due the lack of any record of discord or disagreements in the early days of the organization. A much relished story handed down by word of mouth in the Association is of the president who used to close each meeting of the board of directors by saying, "Ladies, this has been a sweet meeting. All motions have been passed unanimously and no differences of opinion have been registered." This period passed and later years show plenty of differences of opin-

ion, but they show also few divergences that led to actual splits in organization or withdrawal of groups of the membership. To the concept of unity Association leadership has ever given more than lip service. This is so evident that the question inevitably arises, Has the price of this so-well-guarded unity been excessive?

To the fact that for the first fifty years of its existence the Young Women's Christian Association was apparently of little interest to anyone outside its immediate circle is due the lack of reference to or comment on the organization in the general studies made of social work, social movements, and even of religious movements in the United States. Not until the great expansion both locally and nationally which came at the time of the World War did the Young Women's Christian Association receive the recognition of cooperative relationship with other social agencies and with religious groups.

In addition to the written material available as sources, interviews with individuals connected with the organization over long periods have been used. Such interviews have served as a check on selection and evaluation rather than as a source of factual information and at times have served to illuminate motives that in the written record were obscure.

The third difficulty involved was that of the personal equation in selecting and eliminating material. Even with as limited a subject as one institution over a period of seventy-five years and with the possibility of examining all or nearly all the extant available material, nevertheless questions of selection and elimination constantly arose. The author is quite aware that a subjective element was inevitable. Constant check by referring to those who have had long personal connection with the organization,

either as lay or professional workers, has, it is hoped, somewhat modified this subjective element. The attempt has been constant to pursue all along the way lines of thought and action that have shown persistence or repetition. It is obvious that decisions as to relative importance of events, policy and program have had to be made, and that in such decisions an element of subjective approach has entered. An attempt has been made to make these decisions in the light of subsequent events. If, for instance, over the years a particular type of program has grown and expanded, it is assumed that the beginnings of that program were of consequence.

The fourth difficulty involved was discovering whether the generalizations that grew out of the material and the concepts that could be identified were valid for social institutions and are possible of verification through further studies of social institutions. In other words, there was the attempt not only to record growth and development but also to explain the nature of these processes.

In order to follow more closely the somewhat complex history a chronological table has also been developed. Much of this, for the early years, is taken from *Fifty Years of Association Work Among Young Women,* written in 1915 by Elizabeth Wilson. In the appendix are included various documents of important source material, such as the different Christian membership tests of the organization, that seem necessary for reference although too lengthy to include in the text. The final process of evaluation has been the critical reading of the document by six individuals related to the Young Women's Christian Association in different capacities over a long period of years.

There are distinct limitations to this study and the

opinions or conclusions expressed in it. Relatively speaking, it covers a recent period, and the question has been raised by writers on the historical method as to the possibility of treating recent data satisfactorily as history.

It would, however, seem doubtful wisdom to postpone the writing of the story of a social institution until the verdict of the years is in, when by that time the organization itself, built as it is into the immediacies of the fabric of living, may have ceased to exist or to be of any interest to anyone.

A further and serious limitation of this study has been referred to, namely, the almost uniformly laudatory character of the written comments during the early years of the Young Women's Christian Association in this country. For this reason official records have been the main and in many cases the only source of factual data. As was pointed out, the fact that the organization was of little interest outside its own ranks precluded the corrective of outside and critical comment. Moreover, the habit of constant analysis and survey of work and program by independent agencies that has developed in social work in more recent years was unknown in the last century. It would of course be a simple task, but one of hindsight, to point out, in the light of the experience and knowledge available in the nineteen-thirties, the mistakes, the errors in judgment, the complacency of these early leaders of the Young Women's Christian Association.

A list of source materials is included at the end of each chapter.

Acknowledgment is due to the many individuals who have read all or portions of the manuscript, answered questions, and assisted in finding material.

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THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

CHAPTER I

The Beginnings of the Young Women's Christian Association—1855-1871

THE "Association idea," starting first among young men, arose and spread with great spontaneity in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is difficult to decide from existing records whether credit for the beginnings should go to Germany, to Switzerland, or to England. Young men came together for Bible study and fellowship in Germany and Switzerland some years before such gatherings—directly resulting in the organization of Young Men's Christian Associations—can be traced in England. While in all three countries much of the vitality of the movements came from the renewed strength of the evangelical churches, nevertheless, of the three, the beginnings in England were least closely connected with the church and professional church leadership and more permeated with that interdenominational character which has come to be considered basic to the "Association idea." From England also came the earnest attempts to apply Christian standards to problems of daily life and behavior. An unusual element in the situation lay in the fact that such an idea, so vital a part of the Christian life, could be promoted by an organization outside the churches.

While all this was happening to young men, an individual here and there began to realize that women and girls

too were in need of "opportunities for recreation, instruction and Christian companionship." There were simultaneous beginnings of this awareness of the needs of women in Germany and in England. In Germany the work was closely related to the State church; in England the religious impetus had less relation to organized church work and was more directly led by women.

In England there were two separate beginnings to what eventually became the Young Women's Christian Association—the Prayer Union, started quite simply by Miss Emma Robarts in 1855 among her own friends "for their mutual benefit and for that of any young women in their respective spheres whom they might be enabled to influence for good"; and the General Female Training Institute, founded also in 1855 in London by the Honorable Mrs. Arthur Kinnaird, and originally a home for nurses returning from the Crimean War.

The list of young women for whom the group led by Miss Robarts in 1855 prayed is as follows:

1. Our Princesses and all who are in the glitter of fashionable life.
2. Daughters at home of the middle classes.
3. Young wives and mothers.
4. Governesses in families and teachers in day and Sunday schools.
5. Shop women, dressmakers, milliners and seamstresses.
6. Domestic servants.
7. Factory girls.
8. Young women in our Unions, hospitals, and reformatories; the criminal and the fallen.
9. Those who are enchained by Judaism, Popery and Heathenism.

We see from this list that one section of the British beginnings was from its inception concerned, in thought at least, with a complete cross-section of the woman life of England and with a missionary look toward the rest of the world.

Both these organizations spread rapidly to other parts of England through the contagious enthusiasm of their leadership and the acceptableness to young women of the objectives of the movements. In 1877 the Honorable Mrs. Kinnaird and Miss Robarts met informally for the first time at the offices of the Prayer Union and decided to bring the two organizations together under the name of the Young Women's Christian Association. Miss Robarts explained the adoption of this name "simply as the feminine of Young Men's, which had already become known to many of the same friends." Evidently no greater formality was needed to bring about this union than the mutual agreement of the two leaders over a cup of tea.

Miss Robarts died soon after this plan was made, and when the reorganization was completed, Mrs. Kinnaird became vice-president of the London Division and Mrs. Pennefather, of the Prayer Union Group, became vice-president of a Country and Foreign Division, with the Earl of Shaftesbury as president.

These early instances of organization of women for women grew naturally out of the conditions in England at that time. The mid-Victorian age was bringing many changes, particularly in the work-opportunities open to women outside their own homes. After the Crimean War women began to come in increasing numbers from the provinces up to London to find work, in the same way that in the United States after the Civil War women gathered in the cities seeking self-support.

Meanwhile, in the United States also women were beginning to consider not only their own situation but that of other women less fortunately placed than themselves. By the eighteen-fifties some observant persons began to realize that "woman's place in the home" was, because of the developments of the industrial revolution, rapidly diminishing in scope and power. Up to that time the traditional occupations of women who attempted to be wholly or partially self-supporting were domestic service, teaching and sewing. The invention of the sewing machine in 1846 began to change all that. No longer could the paternal or fraternal homestead absorb productively the labors of an indefinite number of "females." Not only had most of the processes connected with the making of clothing—spinning, weaving, dyeing, dressmaking and tailoring—become factory work through the introduction of machinery, but many of the tasks connected with day-to-day living, such as laundry work and some forms of cooking, were also becoming factory processes. Historically these were woman's tasks, and quite naturally she followed them to the factory, the bakery and the laundry—all the more certainly if she happened to be unmarried or a young widow, as was often the case in the years of the Civil War.

Even in those early years of industry, when almost no one was aware of or sensitive to the many abuses of the factory system (because few realized the difference between working long hours in the home and working even longer hours amid the noise and demanding pressure of machinery), there were a few persons who perceived the necessity for changing and controlling those conditions, or at least for mitigating their evil effects.

While there is no clear line of connection between the

beginnings of Association work in England and the beginnings in America, it is very interesting to note that only a few years after the Prayer Unions were first established in England a Ladies' Christian Association was organized in New York City. In February of 1858 Mrs. Marshall O. Roberts formed a Union Prayer Circle which met in a church lecture room for some months. In November of that same year this was organized into a Ladies' Christian Association with thirty-five members. Its first work was holding religious meetings among self-supporting young women, and its stated object was to labor for the temporal, moral and spiritual welfare of self-supporting young women.

In 1860 this group opened a boarding home for young women, and in 1866 the name of the organization was changed to the Ladies' Christian Union. In 1870 a Young Ladies' Branch of this Union was formed, a branch which grew so quickly in power and strength that in 1871 it was reorganized under the name of the Young Ladies' Christian Association of the City of New York. This new branch of work, started at a time when it was unusual for a group of young women by themselves to undertake a philanthropic enterprise, above all one requiring sound business management, rented a room on the top floor of a warehouse on University Place and equipped it to meet the need of women wage-earners in New York. It became a sort of club house for these women, and was the center from which grew the widespread work of the present Young Women's Christian Association of New York City.

Owing to the difference in name, the New York City Association is not called the oldest Young Women's Christian Association in the United States. This distinction has

been given to the Boston Association, organized in 1866, because it was the first to use the name "Young Women's Christian Association." As early as 1859 Mrs. Lucretia Boyd, a city missionary in Boston, became greatly distressed by the serious situation that confronted self-supporting girls, and appealed to a group of church women, setting before them facts from her diary extending over several years. She then asked, "Cannot something be done by benevolent ladies that shall remain a permanent institution?"

In spite of the eagerness of these "benevolent ladies" to do something, the necessity for doing it was not recognized by Boston men, particularly by the pastors of the Boston churches, and their efforts were discouraged. Several years went by before organization was actually accomplished. On March 3, 1866, thirty ladies met at the home of Mrs. Henry F. Durant and adopted a constitution under the name of the Boston Young Women's Christian Association. Its object was "the temporal, moral and religious welfare of young women who are dependent on their own exertions for support."

This Boston Young Women's Christian Association, like the earlier "institutes" and "unions" in England, grew out of the needs of young women. The rural civilization of New England was rapidly changing. The home, in the sense of a self-sustaining community, was breaking up. In a world in which many women and girls were self-supporting and without home ties it was natural to turn for help to Christian women who were church leaders, not only because they represented one of the few groups of women who had an active interest in affairs outside their own homes but also because in those days the business

of providing a home carried with it the obligation of religious influence as well as of care and protection.

The religious revival in the eastern part of the United States during 1857 and 1858, which broke down denominational lines and greatly stimulated religious fervor and the impulse to good deeds, did much also to make possible the forming of a religious organization on an undenominational basis.

After these beginnings in New York and Boston, Young Women's Christian Associations sprang up in city after city. In 1867, Providence, Hartford and Pittsburgh were organized. In 1868, Cincinnati, Cleveland and St. Louis. In 1870, Dayton, Utica, Washington, D. C., Buffalo and Philadelphia were organized. In 1871, Germantown, Newark and Springfield, Massachusetts. In the "Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Women's Christian Associations," held in Pittsburgh in 1875, reports are given of the work of 28 Associations in the United States. Of these Associations, 13 report that they maintain boarding homes with an average capacity of about fifty. Five report that these boarding homes are self-supporting. Ten report Bible classes, 21 prayer meetings, 15 that they helped young women to find employment, 10 that they have libraries; 7 report that they maintain sewing schools; 5 report classes in "secular branches" comprising history, writing and bookkeeping; 7 report that they furnish entertainments of a varied character for young women, 2 that they have restaurants, 8 that they have temporary lodgings for young women, and 14 that they own property valued at from $3,000 to $205,000, with a total valuation of $793,900. The membership of these 28 Associations is estimated, with 6 Associations not reporting, at 8,604.

One of the continuing characteristics of the Young Women's Christian Association has been its capacity for propagating itself without direct promotion and with great rapidity. Its history is an example of the attraction of an idea and of the dynamic of person to person contact. As the number of Associations grew, other groups, organized for similar purposes, changed their names in order to become a part of this ongoing movement which was capturing the imagination of women in so many places. This same ongoing quality has persisted through the years. Associations are still springing up because some one or two persons in a community have known the Young Women's Christian Association in another place; and nearly every year one or more groups organized under other names or for other purposes are asking to become Young Women's Christian Associations.

In a few instances, over the years, Young Women's Christian Associations have been discontinued—in some cases by formal action, in others by unofficial disintegration. Student Associations and those in rural districts are most subject to this short tenure of life, in part due probably to the entire lack of institutional features, which in the case of Associations in larger or less specialized communities have served to tide over the recurring periods of inadequate leadership and lack of clarity of function.

All reports in these early years emphasize the Christian motivation both in organization and in type of work done. The following statement occurs in a summary report made in 1876:

> But above all, the great aim of the Associations is to win souls for Christ, and it is this object which occupies the best thoughts and noblest efforts of those engaged in the work.

> Yet of this part of the work, the results cannot be counted up. They will be known only on that day when the Searcher of all hearts shall say to those who have been faithful in the discharge of this duty, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." [1]

The word "Christian" is constantly used. The providing of a Christian home, the leadership of Christian women, the effect of Christian influences and similar phrases show how uppermost in the minds of these women was the consciousness of the reason for their work.

Meanwhile the programs of the newly organized Associations were growing rapidly, with no more specific goal in mind than that of providing the influence and protection of a Christian home for women and girls who had left their own homes to come to the cities in order to be self-supporting.

The new Boston Association quickly established itself in rooms, comfortably furnished and provided with books and magazines and a "loaned piano." A general secretary was also engaged, of "attractive personality and lovable disposition." It is interesting to note that thus early in Association history many of the present programs had their beginning. The general secretary helped girls to find jobs and places to live; luncheons were served in the Association rooms; recreation and educational classes were offered.

From the records of the Boston Association, drawn from the diary of Mrs. Lucretia Boyd, the city missionary who was instrumental in organizing that Association, comes the following statement:

> Its records revealed a deplorable state of things in regard to the working girls of Boston. She found the majority in

attic rooms of lodging houses, with the lower stories occupied chiefly by young men, many boarding themselves, and struggling with poverty, loneliness and isolation; neglected in sickness, helpless when out of work, and subject to chance acquaintances from among the lower strata of society. They seldom found their way into social circles, but few proved to be regular churchgoers, and only an occasional one in the Sunday school.[2]

It is no wonder that under these circumstances the boarding home—later called the Association residence—should have been a major feature of the programs. What those girls needed more than anything else, apparently, was a comfortable, safe, cheap place to live.

Next to a home, a job was the most important need. Very rapidly the Associations took on the duties of informal employment bureaus. For a long time this was done in the simplest possible fashion through the personal acquaintance of one woman or another with an employer.

All the simple homely desires were gradually being taken care of through the developing program. Sewing machines, still a novelty, were provided that girls might make and alter their own clothes; opportunities for simple home recreation and music for entertaining their friends—these too were found in the early years. A wide variety of occupations was represented in the boarding homes even in very early days. The following statement is taken from a report of the New York City Association for 1876:

The members of the "Home" family are, as previously stated, employed as clerks, milliners, dressmakers, teachers in mission and other schools, students at Cooper Institute, in phonography, telegraphy, and School of Design, contributors to the press, copyists, artists, students of the Academy

of Design, medical students, editors, Bible-readers, city missionaries, engravers, machine-operators, and teachers, lace and feather makers, workers in crape, employees of paper pattern establishments, etc.[3]

It is no wonder that a varied program was demanded and that the work of this Association grew with rapidity. It was, however, only a short time before these women who had had their attention drawn in the first place to the needs of young working girls, realized the values and satisfactions in group organization as a way of service. Speedily the Young Women's Christian Associations enlarged their function so that they not only provided a widely varied program for the girls who lived under their roof and for others near by in the community, but also began to organize a way by which Christian women could give service wherever and of whatever kind needed in the community.

This was a period of almost complete individualism in the developing programs of Young Women's Christian Associations. The field was wide and singularly free. Social work of all kinds was in its beginnings and as a vocation for women was still unrecognized. These were undoubtedly the days when the Young Women's Christian Association developed that taste for pioneering which has in all the years since been an outstanding characteristic.

In looking over the variety of programs in those early days, one is astonished at what those women dared and what they accomplished. It was still a period when the place of women was distinctly in the home, and to assume, as they did, responsibilities without adequate financial backing was more revolutionary than it is today. The Association in Dayton, Ohio, in 1876 said, "Our field is our

entire city and the public institutions in its vicinity," and they proceeded as far as possible to occupy that field. Of the activities for girls and women carried on directly through the Associations themselves, the outstanding were: housing, finding work, free lectures and receptions, free classes of a wide variety—many of them vocational—libraries, recreation and various social activities.

It is evident that while in that day recreation was considered highly desirable, nevertheless the justification for the Young Women's Christian Association's efforts in that line was apparently its use as a means toward an end rather than as an end in itself. The following quotation from a report of the New York City Association in 1879 makes clear not only what kind of entertainment seemed to them desirable but also the reason for having it:

> First the value. The New York Young Women's Christian Association considers entertainments to be of great value in its work. As human nature is constituted it craves amusement, and we must take human nature as we find it, adapting our work to its needs. The hard-working person seldom desires to be instructed. She not only desires but seeks to be amused. An entertainment is thus the snare we spread to catch the birds. When a woman is once within the Association building, drawn there by an attractive entertainment, a cordial invitation to repeat the visit and avail herself of the other privileges offered her seldom fails in its object. Thus the entertainment becomes the door by which a woman enters upon the enjoyment of all other benefits of the Association, chief among which we rank the Bible class and the religious training which is given there. . . .
>
> Second—Forms. The entertainment selected should be elevating and noble in character, for we should never forget that we seek the highest good of our fellow creatures. Every-

> thing that verges on the vulgar, no matter how amusing, should be carefully excluded. Music of a popular nature, readings and recitations both pathetic and humorous, stereopticon views and panoramas, are all forms from which to select and arrange a series of entertainments for the working classes. In the beginning of such a series refreshments might be provided as an additional attraction; but when the series is well established they will not be necessary. The entertainments should be given in the evening, as that is the only time a working person has for recreation, and they should be short, in order that they may refresh and not weary the audience.[4]

In the carrying on of Christian service throughout the community an even wider variety is found. This divides into the actual organization of work, such as homes for aged women; the conducting of religious services; and the distribution of flowers, fruit and clothing in soldiers' homes, city prisons, workhouses, jails, orphan asylums and hospitals. A report from Pittsburgh in 1880 mentions the following pieces of work being carried on through that Association: Temporary Home for Destitute Women, Home for Aged Women, Senana Branch of the Union Foreign Missionary Society, Boarding Home in Allegheny, Sheltering Arms (apparently a home for unmarried mothers), Hospital for Incurables, Gilmore Mission—an industrial school—Hospital Committee. In this report, also, they regret that the Ladies' Depository and Exchange for Women's Work had had to be abandoned for lack of sufficient patronage. In various cities there were organized flower missions, day nurseries, orphan asylums, homes for widows, training schools for nurses, night schools for boys, "retreats for sinful, sorrowing women." In New Bedford, mothers' meetings were planned and carried out

in the mill districts. These groups were made up largely of English women, the wives of workers in the textile factories. The program was in the main that of a sewing society; material was furnished for garments, and ladies read to the women while they sewed.

The promotion of all this work was not so easy as it sounds. Opposition was encountered in many quarters. In Boston it was seven years from the time Mrs. Boyd made her first reports to groups of Christian women in the churches before the Young Women's Christian Association could be organized, so strong was the opposition of the church leadership to the undertaking of any variety of Christian work not directly a part of the church program. After programs were started, questions arose as to methods and policy. An article in *Faith and Works*, the local magazine of the Philadelphia Association which served also for all Associations for many years, written in December, 1876, asks the following pertinent questions as being of importance to almost all Associations:

> Is it well for Women's Christian Associations in new towns where there are no reading-rooms for young men, to open their rooms to young people of both sexes?
>
> Is it wise for city Associations to open their rooms in the evening?
>
> Will more good result to young women from the use of a pleasant Christian place of resort to spend the evening in, or will more evil be likely to ensue from the encouragement to pass through city streets after nightfall? [5]

Moreover, women's organizations were new. Men had little confidence in women's ability to organize work outside their own homes, particularly if it involved the raising and the spending of a budget. In those early days,

also, the same necessity existed that has continued to the present day, of interpreting the needs of women and girls to a community and a public accustomed to think in terms of boys and men. It was not easy to convince a giving public, who had given generously to establish Young Men's Christian Associations, that an equal responsibility rested on them to supply similar equipment for women. In one of the 1876 reports the following statement occurs:

> If it be important for the Young Men's Christian Association to have good buildings, and bright pleasant rooms to attract the young men of our land within the influence of religion and Christian morality, it is equally important that our own Associations should have equally pleasant and convenient buildings, where they can offer to the toiling young women of our cities the attractions of social relaxation —books, music, etc.—and throw around them the protecting and refining influences of a Christian Home.[1]

Thus early was started a kind of rivalry in providing through the Young Women's Christian Association material equipment for the use of women and girls which should be equal to that provided by the Young Men's Christian Association for men and boys.

There were no limits, it would seem, to the responsibility which these women leaders felt. Their first attention was given to those less privileged than themselves and obviously in need of material help, but soon they realized that not all women of the privileged classes were equipped to carry on Christian service, and they began to recognize the fact that part of their work must be training women for leadership. In 1879 a long article appears on Bible reading for educated women, emphasizing the necessity

for a "deeper and more experiential acquaintance with God's Word."

At this period in the development of the Young Women's Christian Association, no training nor technique other than personal preparation as Christian workers was considered essential for leadership. This was apparently interpreted to mean membership in a Protestant evangelical church, personal commitment to the Christian faith and doctrines as expounded by those churches, and a degree of ability to pass on those convictions to others by word or deed.

In reading over the records of these early years the outstanding characteristics of these women who in a real sense pioneered in Christian social work were their courage and resourcefulness and their tremendous energy. Wherever a need was brought to their attention, or they saw it for themselves, something was done about it. They were fired with a missionary zeal and had a great compassion for all who were suffering or unfortunate. It was the real dawning of a widespread consciousness of responsibility beyond their personal circle of family and friends, in the hearts and minds of women. That they had the time and the opportunity for so much service outside their own homes shows, moreover, that the changing industrial and social circumstances were beginning to have their effect. Many of the processes of living, particularly the making of clothes, had gone out of the homes; labor-saving devices were coming in. Women were looking eagerly for wider educational opportunities and for opportunities for self-expression which took the form of Christian service.

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[1] Cattell, J. P. "Women's Christian Associations in America—Their Work and Its Results," *Faith and Works*, I (August, 1876), p. 4.

[2] "Historical Sketch, 1866-1891," in *Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Boston Young Women's Christian Association* (1891), pp. 18-24.

[3] "Annual Report of the Ladies' Christian Union of New York," *Faith and Works*, I (August, 1876), p. 13.

[4] "Social Entertainments," *Faith and Works*, IV (August, 1879), p. 185.

[5] *Faith and Works*, II (December, 1876), p. 51.

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CHAPTER II

A Growing Movement—1871-1906

EARLY in the life of the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States some, at least, of the leaders saw their work in relation to the social scene of which they were a part. From the report of a conference of Associations in Philadelphia in 1873 comes the following statement:

> We are helping to solve the problem in social science, as to how to bridge the gulf that divides the favored from the less fortunate. There is a constant and somewhat close relationship existing all the time between the members of these classes. . . . It is no dilettante or sentimental philanthropy that will serve the purpose, but that "enthusiasm of humanity" born of the conviction of kinship and fundamental unity. In other words, we are to vitalize the teachings of our Lord, that "we are members one of another." [1]

A few years later this statement appears in a conference report:

> The study of sociological and industrial conditions of women has resulted in two conclusions: First, that the problems relating to women are among the important questions of the day and must be considered and discussed. If the Christian women of the country disregard this obligation, the solution will be attempted; and if a work is organized which meets the social and intellectual needs, but neglects the

> spiritual, it makes it difficult and often impossible to introduce regular Association work. . . .
>
> The second conviction, which is also the result of the year's study, is that the environments are so different in the various fields, that there can be no stereotyped policy.[2]

Again in 1901 the importance of the Young Women's Christian Association in relation to the woman movement is emphasized:

> Among the great humanitarian movements must be counted the efforts which have resulted in the betterment of woman's condition. Properly speaking, this has been an evolution rather than a movement. A prominent factor in this process has been the work of the Young Women's Christian Association; and so important has this work become that it well deserves today to be dignified by the name of movement—so important, indeed, that it would seem scarcely necessary, if we did not know to the contrary, to try to demonstrate its place in the community.[3]

All these quotations serve to stress the growing consciousness of the Association as a force for molding public opinion and for exerting an influence on the social situation. In other words, the Young Women's Christian Association began early to shape its program according to immediate needs in each local situation and at the same time to consider the ways in which these environments should and could be changed. At all times the force back of these efforts, and the point of view, refer directly to the Christian principle of the worth of personality and the goal of an "abundant life" for all. Such a viewpoint is obviously much wider than any one program developed at a particular time and place. Simultaneously with these

reachings out toward wider aims came the questioning of what the Association is as an organization, its uniqueness and its sense of destiny. Inevitably the accusation of vagueness in objective has been attached, it would seem justly, to the general aims of the Young Women's Christian Association, but much of this vagueness is inherent in an organization that sees not the amelioration of this or that condition as its reason-for-being, but rather its share in solving any or all the basic problems in the life of women and girls. In these early writings clear but logical thinking is not evident; there is rather a constant use of generalizations and high-minded sentiments.

In the first few years Young Women's Christian Associations sprang up independently of each other, in eastern cities. It was quite natural that representatives of these organizations should want to get together and discuss their program and their common problems. The first such conference took place in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1871. Eight Associations were represented by delegates and thirteen by letter. The report says, "Practical questions were discussed and the hearts of all present were strengthened to go forward." At the close of this meeting a resolution was offered and adopted that similar meetings be held at intervals of not more than two years. The second meeting was held in Philadelphia in 1873. At this meeting delegates from seventeen Associations were present and in all, thirty-six Associations reported. From that time on, this conference met regularly every two years in different sections of the country.

This provision for regular meetings to discuss common problems was embodied in a simple constitution and was all that this first national organization, called the Interna-

tional Board, undertook to do for some years. It made no attempt to promote organization in new places and little effort to standardize work already going on—other than the natural standardization that came about through the interchange of methods and experiences. In spite of the lack of formal organization or an employed staff or a budget, the International Board had a real place in the development of the Association movement. One of the former members of that board still refers to it as a "rope of sand." It was, however, much more like a stream of running water vitally connecting the different Associations with one another and yet in no way restricting or hampering them.

Meanwhile the Young Men's Christian Association was developing very rapidly in the United States, along more definite lines than the Young Women's Christian Association and with more formal organization. In particular, the Young Men's Christian Association went into the colleges and universities and organized work among students. It was natural, of course, that in the co-educational institutions the girls as well as the boys should be interested. The early Young Women's Christian Associations had been definitely city institutions, growing out of the particular conditions that arose when girls came to cities to find work, and little thought had been given to student work. But in 1873 the first student Young Women's Christian Association was organized in Normal University, Normal, Illinois, and from then on student Associations have played a large part in developing the growing dynamic of this Christian fellowship.

This first student Association was formed for the purpose of united Bible study, for prayer, and for "Christian conversation." The already organized Young Men's Christian Association served as a goad to the girls, and though

their first organization was entirely separate, they took their form of both name and constitution from the men's group. Their meetings were held in the vestibule of the Congregational Church. Other student Associations gradually came into being with little apparent connection with each other or outside stimulus.

At its sixth conference, in 1881, the International Board received a representative of one of the student organizations and accepted her recommendation to promote Young Women's Christian Association work in colleges and seminaries.

All these first student Young Women's Christian Associations were in the middle section of the country and in co-educational institutions. It seems fair to assume that the presence on the same campus of a Young Men's Christian Association which might or might not include women students in its fellowship was a primary incentive to the starting of a separate organization for women. Cooperation in work between the two organizations continued; joint meetings were held and women delegates were welcomed at the state conventions of the Young Men's Christian Association.

These early student Associations were continuously influenced by the Young Men's Christian Association. They were visited and advised by state Young Men's Christian Association secretaries and followed their plans of organization into state groups. The so-called "membership basis" of the Young Men's Christian Association at that time was a restricted one, and the women student groups proposed to the International Board a basis for the entire work of that board, not only student but also city, which

followed the Young Men's Christian Association plan. The basis as proposed was:

> That a permanent international organization of the Young Women's Christian Associations be formed, whose object shall be to promote the physical, social, mental and spiritual welfare of young women; whose membership shall consist of Young Women's Christian Associations whose active, i.e., voting and office-holding membership, shall be limited to young women who are members in good standing of an evangelical church.[4]

This proposal was made or supposed to be made to the eighth convention of the International Board in Cincinnati in the autumn of 1885. Records are obscure at this point, but the recommendation was not presented, and to what extent it was discussed privately is uncertain. The adult adviser of the students was the wife of a Young Men's Christian Association secretary. She apparently wished to hold control of the student group in order to keep it in line with Young Men's Christian Association methods rather than to have it part of an organization of adult women with, for those days, liberal religious ideas. Some individuals concerned in the situation believe that, consciously or unconsciously, the true state of affairs was withheld from the students. In any case, the women students apparently believed that they had failed, and left the conference. The following year, 1886, this same group of student Young Women's Christian Associations, with some others, formed the International Committee of the Young Women's Christian Associations, later called the American Committee and including until 1901 a few Canadian Associations * as well as Associations in the United

* "From 1873-1893 nine Canadian cities and ten Canadian schools and colleges had Associations affiliated with one or the other of the United

States. This new national group had headquarters in Chicago. The International Board, much more informally organized, had its headquarters in the residence city of the president, usually a different one every two years but commonly in the east.

In 1891 it was proposed that the division of work be schools and colleges for the American Committee and cities for the International Board. This plan was rejected, and the American Committee proposed amalgamation on its basis of organization. The International Board rejected this proposal in the following statement:

> 1. The proposed terms involve an entirely new organization and compel the yielding of points which experience has taught are vital.
>
> Careful study of the needs of young women for over a quarter of a century has taught the older Christian Associations that great diversity of means is necessary to attain the best results.
>
> The adoption of the limitations necessary to conform the work of the Young Women's Christian Associations to that of the Young Men's Associations would cause the curtailment in Young Women's Christian Associations of most efficient work in many directions, and with no commensurate gain.
>
> Thus while the end desired by both is the same, the means

States Young Women's Christian Association organizations—some with the International Committee, others with the committee afterward called the American Committee. The development of a Canadian National Association came between 1893 and 1901, and in the first year eight Associations endorsed the constitution, so that they could be incorporated as a national entity in the World's Young Women's Christian Association.

"The first real meeting of the Dominion Council was held in Ottawa, January 22, 1895."—*Association Chronicles,* page 6 (World's Y.W.C.A., London, 1926).

by which it is attained must widely vary, or the highest good will be missed.

2. The adoption of a constitution restricting the active membership of this board would simply mean its disruption. It cannot see the gain in union with a younger, less-experienced body if that union must result in the loss of the fellowship of many who have long been most earnest and sympathetic co-workers, whose labors have been visibly stamped with God's approval.[5]

Within this situation were many different elements of conflict—the older against the younger, the religious liberal against the more restricted, the East against the Middle West, and the influence of the Young Men's Christian Association against a distinctly women's movement. Apparently those were days when little was said if it meant disagreement, but interviews with members of the old International Board show that there still remains some feeling that there were, on the part of some of the older leaders of the American Committee, a lack of fair play and a concealment of aims which are still deplored as having led to the forming of two separate national organizations that continued almost parallel work for twenty years, hampered by the inevitable misunderstandings and confusions of such a situation.

In any case, student Young Women's Christian Associations increased with considerable rapidity and in many types of institutions—women's colleges, normal schools and professional schools, as well as in the co-educational denominational colleges and state universities. Their programs continued to be deeply and evangelically religious. Small prayer circles in the residences and the period of private prayer commonly known as the "Morning Watch"

were emphasized. Missionary interests were from the beginning closely connected with the student Associations. This emphasis found its expression largely through cooperation with the Student Volunteer Movement organized in 1886, and then later through sharing in the organization, in 1895, of the World's Student Christian Federation.

Not only were these young, vigorous Associations interested in developing national Young Women's Christian Association organization; they also began to look toward world organization. Their interest was not confined to work carried on in the Orient through church boards but included Association work in other countries, particularly England and France. With these latter countries the local Associations in the United States carried on some kind of correspondence and there were usually reports or letters from them at the biennial conventions. This interest in world organization culminated in 1894 in the forming of the World's Young Women's Christian Association, with headquarters in London.

It is easy to see that in addition to the efforts that were going into the organizing of new Associations and the developing of new programs there was also a desire for an active fellowship of women on the widest possible basis. All this had its effect on the programs of local Associations, both widening the members' interest as individuals in the lives of women of other lands and also stimulating them to greater effort in developing their own work.

Meanwhile, in every meeting of the Associations and in many magazine articles, attempts were being made to define more closely the work of the Young Women's Christian Association. The following are typical statements:

The chief cornerstone on which rests the foundation of Women's Christian Association work is the purpose to "help those who help themselves." One of the chief outgrowths of this purpose thus far is the establishment of safe, suitable and economical homes for girls who earn their own support. In making this statement we have by no means overlooked the great variety of good work done in various ways by our Associations at large, employment bureaus, libraries, industrial classes, etc. We speak merely of the one feature of work in which a large proportion are alike engaged.[6]

Its philanthropies are of the highest order, helping without pauperizing. It teaches charity by object lessons, and practically carrying beneath the lesson the substance itself, as it is translated in the Revised Version—Love. All work done by women for women safely finds place under the broad and comprehensive term it uses—"Women's Christian Association." [7]

The Young Women's Christian Association is a powerful means of grace and a perpetual source of happiness to every young woman who earnestly enters into its mission. It is a university for the development of noblest Christian womanhood.[8]

First, then, the true end and aim of Women's Christian Association work may be declared to be the uplifting of women.

Second, it is for women in our country. . . .

Thirdly, our work is, in all cases, for the women of the industrial classes. . . .

Fourthly, our work being for women of the industrial classes, it has reached out to comprehend all their wants and all their possible circumstances; to provide for their bodies, their minds, their spiritual needs and their industrial necessities.[9]

> Object—The Y.W.C.A. seeks to awaken young women to a realization of their responsibility in Christian endeavor, and especially to their peculiar influence over other young women. Every young woman is her sister's keeper.[10]

> The growth that most marks the progress of a Y.W.C.A. is the internal growth. That society makes genuine progress when it awakens within the hearts of its members a sense of their duty to God, themselves and their fellow women, and spurs them on to right action and prompt performance of their duty.[11]

> There can be but one mission for such an Association as ours, and that is to carry the gospel of our Lord to those who do not know Him, be they those whom society smiles upon or those upon whom she has turned her back.[12]

While these more general statements were constantly being made about the work and the objectives of the Young Women's Christian Association, the more detailed reports concerned themselves with the ways in which these high purposes were to be accomplished. These years saw a specialization in program and an attempt to meet the needs of widely different types of women and girls that went far in advance of the very informal efforts of the early days.

The most outstanding work for many years, and indeed in the minds of many people the same thing is true today, was the providing of boarding homes or residences for self-supporting women. Such work is the obvious meeting of an obvious need and has done much to establish the Young Women's Christian Association in the minds of the average citizen as an organization which helps and protects girls. Many questions in regard to these boarding homes came up early in the life of the Association. In 1879,

papers were presented at the conference discussing the question, "Should Boarding Homes Be Self-Sustaining?" The following quotation is from those papers:

> The independent principle God has implanted in the human heart is no light thing to be tampered with, but a most precious flower, to be cultivated and nourished. It would ill become American women to blight and destroy the gift of the all-wise Creator; and to everything there is a beginning. Once degrade a young girl to a spirit of dependence, and you take her to the brink of a precipice. Foster and cultivate the spirit of doing everything for herself, and you help to make her a power that will be felt by those who come after her. As the aim in this branch of Association work is the "temporal, moral and spiritual welfare of women," every point must be carefully guarded and every side watched. . . . Only a short time since, twenty-eight young women were asked the question—Shall the price of board be reduced to meet the lower rate of wages now prevailing? To make it easier for you shall we fix a price for board which will not fully cover the running expenses, and will oblige us to appeal to the public to make up the deficiency? A look at the faces of those addressed gave the answer without one spoken word, but the words were added, "We do not wish to be dependent, and much prefer that the price paid should cover the expense"; therefore, taking the testimony of those most interested, this question is answered in the negative, and the conclusion deduced that to follow out this work successfully in all its bearings, "boarding homes must be self-supporting."
>
> It may be urged that many are unable to pay even the low price asked for board, and yet are just the persons that should be helped and encouraged. At this point arises another question: Are not many unwise in the choice of occupation, and do they not need counsel and advice? Hundreds

> of houses could be filled with a class of incompetent workers, or more properly idlers, who would be little more than paupers; but would that be lifting up or helping them? No; help them to find work they can do, that they may not be dependent; but do not drag down to their level the industrious, capable girl who can pay for all she receives, and thus degrade the work itself. If there are, as there always will be, individual cases that need special help, let other means of assistance be devised, but let the Home be free from the appearance of public charity.[13]

It is interesting that in 1879 the principle of self-supporting residences was maintained so ably in the Association conferences, a principle that is still recognized and carefully guarded in the Young Women's Christian Association. In those days, however, as the quotations abundantly show, the point of reference for such a policy was the Christian principle of the worth of personality, while today the point of reference is an economic one related to a good business basis and the necessity for a minimum living wage. The value put upon this particular type of work is shown by the statement in the report of the Louisville Association in March, 1883—"It is believed that in the grand development of public institutions for which this century is noted, none more important than this network of boarding homes for young women has been conceived."

In the Fourth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor of the United States, the work of the Young Women's Christian Association for working women in large cities is commended. It is the boarding home offering "protection" and the opportunity for "cooperative" living at a price within their means that attracted his attention. In speaking of the Young Women's Christian Association homes he said:

> These homes should not be regarded as "charities," for they are not such. They should be looked upon rather as cooperative enterprises, where the funds which the women would individually expend for a poor and insufficient living are, by combination and judicious management, rendered sufficient to give to all those advantages which without such combination would be beyond the reach of any.[14]

Next to the providing of a place to live, the immediate problem faced by the Association was that of training girls for remunerative employment outside their own homes. Sewing classes were organized in many Associations, particularly those to teach women to use the sewing machine. Classes in domestic science were promoted, and when in the seventies the typewriter came into use, the Young Women's Christian Association organized with great trepidation classes in this new skill. There was hesitation in doing this because the women felt that the work of a typist might be too great a strain, both mentally and physically, on young women.

In some cases this training for work developed into work rooms, where garments were made and either sold or given to the needy sick.

Meanwhile, in other cities, programs were being developed for little girls. A report from Oakland, California, in 1881, makes the following statement:

> A "Juvenile Christian Association" was organized about a year ago, its object being to work for the poor children of Oakland. Already 72 garments have been distributed. . . .[15]

and at the International Conference in St. Louis in 1881 a paper was given on "Work Among Young Girls" which

emphasized the need for developing Association work among younger girls of all classes. The report states the fears of the women as follows:

> While Christian women have been absorbed in the multitudinous good work open to them on every side, there has latterly appeared a need and a danger which may well fill the hearts of the thoughtful with dread. It is one found in all parts of the land, though from the nature of the case most apparent in the great cities. I refer to the growing frivolity and tendency to dissipation among young girls. It would be almost impossible to go out upon a public thoroughfare, or into a park during the earlier hours of night, without encountering scores of young misses, mostly in groups of three or four, sauntering along, talking and laughing loudly, carrying on flirtations with young men, whom, many times, they have never before seen, exposing themselves to the most dreadful dangers that can beset a young girl's pathway with the heedlessness of a moth dallying with the fire sure to consume it. . . .
>
> Nor are the girls to be found in the streets by any means exclusively of the lower classes; from families of wealth and position, from the avenue quite as frequently as from the alley, come the troops of giddy beings whose welfare has become one of the most serious and perplexing questions of the hour.[16]

The type of program developed was not very different from that of the older girls—simple sorts of amusements, "literary and art studies," and the opportunity to be a part of an organization—always appealing to girls of that age. Several times the work is referred to as bearing a relation to the Association that a Sunday school does to the church. In some cases it was called junior work.

In the nineties the Associations began to make efforts to get in touch with business girls who did not naturally come to the Association. In the early days the problem of recruiting had hardly existed. The Association developed a boarding home with a program, and the need was so great and so immediate that the girls and women who wanted this naturally came to it, though in small numbers. As the years went on, the possibilities for serving women and girls in much larger numbers were seen, and efforts were made to acquaint them with the Association and to attract them to it. One report in 1893, from Kansas City, notes the giving of four teas, at one of which stenographers were entertained; at another, bookkeepers and typists; at a third, telegraph and telephone girls; and at one, girls from business college.

Only rarely in the records is there any direct indication of the attitude of girls toward the program. In 1893 a business girl spoke to the annual convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of Nebraska on "The Young Women's Christian Association from My Point of View." During this speech she said:

> We believe the Y.W.C.A. accomplishes its purposes for the reason that it places young women in a position to help themselves, and to help each other.
>
> Truly, "it is a hard world for girls," and shall we withhold any good thing that may make it easier? [17]

At the same time effort was made to extend the Association into smaller communities. The first county Association was organized in Fillmore County, Minnesota, in 1898, following a meeting of Bible Circles which had been organized by a former student Association leader.

It was in the early nineties also that the first Young

Women's Christian Association among American Indian girls was organized at Haworth Institute, Indian Territory, now the Chilocco Indian School, Chilocco, Oklahoma. This was the first generation of Indian girls to be placed in reservation and non-reservation government boarding schools. The records say:

> The girls were very proud of their Y.W.C.A. and felt that they must live very carefully and truly. They had almost no church privileges and the Association was a church to them. For two summers two of our Topeka Y.W.C.A. girls went down into Indian Territory and with missionary zeal endured hardness that they might bring the light to Indian women and girls near the agency. We especially wanted to help girls who returned to their tepee homes from government schools.[18]

The first organization for Indian girls was quickly followed by others. The purposes and objectives were no different from those in other Young Women's Christian Associations. Sunday afternoon prayer services and Bible study meetings were a major part of the program. The situation was, however, a different one. The almost military system in the government schools at that time and the inexperience of the girls in new surroundings, as well as their lack of knowledge of the English language and the white man's culture, made necessary from the beginning careful work on personal adjustments and help and understanding in adapting to new conditions.

With the developing of a widely varied program it became necessary for the Associations to give attention to methods of organization and administration. As early as 1876 a question was written to the magazine, *Faith and*

Works: "Will someone kindly tell us what is the best way to set about organizing a Young Women's Christian Association in a town or city where none exists?" The answer to this question was, that those interested should get the advice and help of already organized Associations, particularly their form of constitution, then select a committee of from five to nine earnest, intelligent, Christian women from the different denominations represented in the town. Suggestions about parliamentary rules follow.

In 1879 the Boston Association reported that it had found it necessary, in order to carry on its work, to divide its board into several committees. The committees that they list are: housing committee, an employment committee, a reception committee, a devotional committee and a committee on social intercourse and entertainments. In 1881, the principle of committee work having been well established, some of its dangers were evidently beginning to be felt. The following quotation from the report of the New York City Association is of interest here:

> There is one great danger in committee work that must be guarded against. It is that of a too limited interest in their own work to the exclusion of a proper interest in that of other committees. Members ought to feel it both a duty and a privilege to attend the meetings where they can keep themselves properly informed of all the interests of their Association, both for their own sake and in order to properly present the work when it is spoken of by others.[19]

The following statement as to the method of committee work is made in the same report:

> They make their own rules and regulations and devise their own ways and means of work, but all important deci-

sions must be referred by their chairmen to the executive committee for approval; they elect their own officers (except their chairmen, who are appointed by the executive). A very important rule is that no committee can incur any pecuniary obligation without a definite appropriation from the executive. Absence from the work and meetings of the committees for two months, without presentation of reasonable excuse to the chairman, is considered as a resignation, and the member is notified accordingly.

At that time it was customary for the board of directors to meet every week and to have an open meeting of the members of the Association once a month to hear reports of the separate departments. By 1891 we find all the normal problems of administration appearing and being discussed in the periodicals—the relation of staff and board, the organization responsibility of committees, the ways of conducting meetings, the best forms of constitutions, and similar topics. Evidently the monthly board meeting had become customary by 1893, and words of warning are given about the necessity of a fixed time, so that all members of the board may be free from engagements and can be expected to attend.

A major problem in the Association in the early years was, of course, the raising of funds. At first the budgets were small. The residences or boarding homes were self-supporting or nearly so. The employed staff was few in number and low salaried. The Philadelphia Association in 1878, desiring to raise money for the furnishing of a summer cottage at Asbury Park, appointed twelve committees for this purpose, each one to raise one hundred dollars. In 1879 the possibility of asking the churches to support the Association either through an annual collection

or through a canvass of the church membership was suggested.

As the years went on, experience taught these women much. In 1891 an article on financing urges good business methods, a carefully made budget, solicitation beginning with the membership, and careful records. In 1901 the *Evangel* again emphasizes the responsibility of the lay members for raising the budget, and underlines the sentence, "*Never should the burden of finances rest upon the general secretary.*" In 1904 the usual sources of income in any local Association were divided as follows: "First, and peculiar to all, is the membership fee; the next, though not always so, the lunch department; and last, but by no means the least, is the subscription list." Emphasis is placed on solicitation in person rather than by letter, and the following advice appears in the report of the fourth annual conference of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the State of New York in 1891:

> Go to people whose hearts are in sympathy with the work; people with warm hearts and willing hands; who do and give for the cause of Christ in every other direction. I think you will find that when Christian people are convinced where service is to be rendered and an equivalent is to be obtained for the money put into it, they are always ready to give. I believe money can always be raised for Christ's sake; for any cause with true merit, true worth in it; and we are almost certain of achieving the result aimed for if we go in this spirit to the people whose sympathies are in every good work, and present our cause.[20]

In 1895 the following statement appears in the *Evangel:*

> First, that all educational work, including the gymnasium, the employment bureau, the noon rest and the boarding de-

partment, should be made self-supporting; at least this is the end to be worked for. . . .

In calling upon possible contributors, be able to present the Association work strongly, clearly and concisely. If it is a new organization, present needs, ideals and plans; if one with a past, have the facts of the past year's work ready to present strongly at a moment's notice, and if necessary, in a very few minutes' time. If for any reason your Association has not a good record to present, acknowledge misfortunes, mistakes or failures, but be able to present good plans for better work in the future. . . .

Finance committees would not find this work so difficult and would reap greater blessings if they made it a subject of more prayer and of less worry.[21]

Certainly this whole question of finance was a perplexing one and was dealt with in many ways, constructive and unconstructive. The main principles that seem to show over the years are: First, that the Association expected to be in part supported by income from educational classes, from food service and from boarding homes. This is of course the case today in those places where an institutional program is provided. In addition to this source of income it was expected that annual subscriptions would be received from those members of the community who were interested in supporting a definitely Christian work.

As early as 1877 the Association showed an interest in foreign women in this country. Articles on the problems of immigrants and their difficulties of adjustment began appearing in the magazine called *Faith and Works* in that year, though there is no evidence that immigrant girls were served by the Associations until some years later. In January 1892 the following statement in regard to

classes in English for the foreign-born appears in the *Evangel:*

> There is no way in which the Young Women's Christian Association may gain a stronger, surer hold upon the foreign-speaking girls in our cities than by the establishment of such classes as will enable them to gratify their ambition along this line. And in the formation of such classes the perseverance and tact desirable elsewhere in the work will all be needed.[22]

It was not, however, until after the report of the National Board to the national convention in 1913, that a body of principles for the promotion of work with the foreign-born was adopted.

As the responsibility of the Association took shape in the minds of its leadership and conviction grew as to its value and opportunity, the thinking of the leaders and the growing work expanded in two directions. The first is seen in the effort to extend the benefits of the Association to all women and girls in all types of communities, and the second in the increasing variety and richness offered in the program. An early decision of one group of leaders was that work was "formative not reformative." They did not use the term "character building" but that was evidently the idea in their minds.

In developing a useful and varied program the Association was forced to face the fact that the young women coming to it for help in finding jobs were almost totally untrained and with very little education. Moreover, many of them were undernourished and ill-equipped physically to stand the strain of long hours of work in office or shop.

To meet in some degree that latter need, a class in calisthenics was organized in the Boston Association in 1877; later, athletics were started in the park, and by 1884, when the Berkeley Street residence was built, this program had assumed such proportions that a gymnasium, the first Young Women's Christian Association gymnasium in the country, was included in the building. It is certain that in these early years, in one way or another, strenuous athletics—"Delsarte," "Swedish gymnastics," and whatever other form of physical exercise was in vogue—found their way into Association programs in the effort to strengthen and re-create young women. It was not until well into the twentieth century that these varied activities crystallized into a comprehensive program of "positive health."

In the field of education the early Association attempted to meet three distinct needs. The first was for religious education that was Christian but not denominational, the second for vocational training, and the third, in the absence of night schools and extension courses, the desire for general education.

Probably no one service of the Young Women's Christian Association in those days was more thoroughly appreciated than this training for self-support. An important part of this training was for office work:

> As early as 1868 bookkeeping was taught in connection with penmanship. The Civil War had called women into offices and clerical training was in demand. In 1874 Philadelphia introduced telegraphy. In 1880 New York City made a success of a class in phonography, the practice of which in connection with typewriting was said to be the "most remunerative for their sex"; later on, typewriting alone was advertised, with the explanation that "some firms

prefer typewriting to penmanship." In 1880 retouching photograph negatives was taught and a class of eight competent women graduated; then photo coloring, crayons, and India ink drawing, and in 1884 technical design and free hand enlarging." [4]

As has been noted, much of the early training was in sewing, particularly in the use of the sewing machine. In 1888 Boston opened a school of domestic economy, with instruction in cooking, general household management, purchase and care of family supplies, dressmaking and millinery. Later on, courses in practical nursing and the care of children were popular.

To meet the demand for general education, classes in all kinds of cultural subjects as well as in regular high school subjects were started. In some of the larger cities this work developed into elaborate schools with varied and stimulating curricula. This training was so popular that in many cities night-school work in the public schools was the direct outcome of the interest aroused through the Association.

These first years saw also attempts to develop the religious program of the organization. This was an effort to demonstrate a way of life based on the principles of the teaching of Jesus, and thus make real in the lives of girls ideas and ideals which they had known only as theories. There was much groping after methods of expression: prayer meetings were held, vesper services, noon meetings in the factories—all accompanied by direct personal service. The more definitely religious meetings, and the other activities of the Association as well, were considered supplementary to the work of the churches, and the girls in the Bible classes at the Association were the same ones to be found in the Sunday schools.

The following summary of the activities of the Associations affiliated with the American Committee in the year 1893 gives an idea of the scope of the whole as well as of the variety in program and the emphasis on various types of religious work:

> Some interesting figures appear in the statistics published in the Young Women's Christian Association Year Book for 1893. The whole membership reported is 19,723. Of this, 10,067 are in the 52 city Associations; 9,656 is the college membership. Of the whole number, 16,633 are active members. Many Associations do not wish to report conversions; however, the number of 1,103 can be recorded (there were 924 in the report of the previous year); of this number 310 are in cities; 126 here have joined churches, many of those professing conversion already being members of churches. There are 317 Bible classes and workers' training classes in the 307 Associations; 42 daily prayer meetings.
>
> In the city Associations 47 report rooms as against 31 last year. Running expenses, $42,967.25, furnishings to the value of $22,491, and libraries valued at $3,143, show that the business side of the Association was not neglected. Nine report gymnasiums, the others carrying on their physical culture classes in rooms used for other purposes. In the Association rooms there have been 430 social gatherings, 344 lectures, 151 educational classes.
>
> Twenty Associations have recorded 1,108 situations secured for young women.
>
> Thirty-three college Associations have rooms for their use; 3 have buildings erected for them conjointly with the Young Men's Christian Associations; 23 have Association libraries.
>
> In the past year 360 receptions have been held; 342 college women intend to be foreign missionaries.[23]

At the same time the Association leadership was feeling out toward the point of view that all service and all program in the Association can have religious values, another example of the Young Women's Christian Association's growing appreciation of its responsibility in the field of character development definitely Christian in its philosophy. In 1893 a local Association report lists a variety of services, including the following:

> Meeting girls at the wharves who arrive as strangers on our shores and ministering to their bodily and spiritual needs.
>
> Aiding ambitious girls to an education, with the hope that their talents will be consecrated to God's service.
>
> Placing the unskilled under religious influences while being trained in some branch of industry. . . .

and ends with the statement:

> By the above means the ..... Association is permeated with general religious instruction.[24]

During this period when the Association was both broadening and deepening its program it was becoming conscious of the need for combining in its philosophy and work both unity and diversity.

The word "industrial" was used very early in Association history. A report of the New York City Association for 1878 speaks of the "industrial committee." It is evident, however, that in those days the work was that of training women to earn their living through industry rather than the conscious effort of later years to develop the leadership of women in industry. Of course, teaching women to sew on the sewing machine or to become skillful in other factory processes did mean that women in industry

knew the Young Women's Christian Association, and used its other resources. The emphasis, however, was on helping them to find their place in a world which offered new economic opportunities to women at a time when there was little or no social differentiation between workers in industry and those in business or in teaching. It was only with the development of the factory system on a wide scale and the coming of large numbers of women and girls from other countries to take their place in the industrial ranks of America that the Association gradually became conscious of a group having interests and problems of its own.

By 1900 the Young Women's Christian Association had become aware that though there were a large number of Associations in factory towns or cities, few of them were reaching the young women working in those factories in any numbers. One of the reports at that time says, "Young women who are employed in factories are just like other young women," and upon that idea the Association began what was called extension work. It was an attempt to carry the Young Women's Christian Association into the section of the city where the factories were, in some places introducing classes, gospel meetings and lunch rooms in the factories themselves. It is interesting that in the annual report for 1903 of the American Committee the following statement is made:

> Only after the Association was established in cities and had shown the community that it is a fourfold work for all young women could it safely have taken up a phase of work for one company of young women, focusing thought and attention upon them without overreaching and overtopping other departments.[25]

This statement is given as an explanation of why there had not been earlier emphasis on service to industrial women.

By 1892 the Associations were beginning to give thought to maintaining standards in their work and to improving their methods. A report of the state conference of the Associations of New York, in 1892, gives a list of precepts for local Associations, including:

> That in all the class work, the very best teachers should be employed and always Christians.
>
> That it was best to employ one of our own sex in the gymnasium.
>
> That the social life of the Association should be educating as well as entertaining.
>
> That we should not allow old books which would never be read to be placed on the library shelves. Make a bonfire of them so that they need not be in the way at housecleaning time.

By June 1898 these precepts were becoming principles. The following statement appears in the *Evangel* of that month:

> In order to accomplish the work outlined by the convention of 1897, to avoid the dangers which we are unquestionably facing, and to make the Young Women's Christian Association take the place which is now open for it, there are a few duties which every city worker should keep in mind:
>
> 1. To study the sociological and industrial conditions of women and to apply Christian principles in solving the problems.
>
> 2. To introduce practical courses of study so that domes-

tic service may be dignified and higher ideals of home life created.

3. To emphasize Bible study with a desire to aid in supplying the demand for Sunday-school teachers; also to assist in making Sunday-school teaching "reach the same standard as our day-school instruction." [26]

In September 1900 the following statement about the fundamental principles of the Association appears:

> The talk on Fundamental Principles claimed that a Young Women's Christian Association is a distinct institution established for distinct purposes, that it exists to benefit all young women of a community and is maintained by the same young women that receive benefit from it. That its legitimate work is religious development, education, both literary and practical, social life and culture, physical training and the business advancement of its members. That the union with the evangelical churches is required in order to bring this about, hence the well-known basis of membership.[27]

In 1901 comes the following statement:

> We must not cater to any one particular class but to the greatest number of young women. The middle-class young women are now largely interested in the Association. The extremes need to be touched. In factory openings try to establish cordial relations between employers and employees.[28]

A certain clarity of method as well as of objective was becoming evident. At the turn of the century, among the leaders of the two national movements there was a growing recognition of the necessity of concentrating the work of the Association on young women and the development of programs of continuing interest and educational value.

In spite of this growing conception of the Association, the institutional features, particularly in the larger cities, changed slowly, and such work as homes for the aged, flower missions and other distinctly welfare activities were prolonged well into the twentieth century.

The two national organizations, the International Board and the American Committee, continued to have somewhat different emphases in their objectives and in their programs. The American Committee included a large number of student as well as city Associations and was concerned to build unity of religious interest by limiting membership to those Associations using an evangelical basis, a phrase which at that time was interpreted to mean membership in a Protestant evangelical church. Undoubtedly it was these factors of youth and youthful eagerness to tell the "good news," as well as the general interest of church people in "missions," which influenced the American Committee, soon after it was formed, to extend the Young Women's Christian Association to other lands.

The International Board was less concerned about the actual constitutional basis of the Associations which it combined; rather, it relied upon unity in facing the needs of young women, and unity of effort in attempting to meet them, to produce the oneness of spirit necessary to its continuity. Since it included in its membership most of the large industrial cities of the east and middle west, it is not surprising that the program of this group placed strong emphasis on service, particularly on travelers' aid work.

The story of the slow coming together of these two groups into one strong national organization is a long one. As is often the case, the stimuli toward union were both immediate specific issues and deep conviction as to the

value of unity. Local communities were confused and baffled by the existence of two national organizations, with local affiliations, that were so alike in many ways, including the name, and so different at other points. At the same time, far-sighted leaders were glimpsing the possibilities that might be realized by one organization of women united on a Christian basis and committed to the attempt to make possible "the abundant life" for women and girls everywhere. After much preliminary consultation, the conference of the International Board in November 1905, at Baltimore, and the convention of the American Committee in Chicago in January 1906, voted to make the attempt to unite the two existing national movements.

A joint committee of fifteen representatives of the two organizations, under the chairmanship of Grace H. Dodge of New York, was organized. This committee prepared material and exhibits which were sent out to local Associations in order that there should be general understanding of the nature, the privileges and the obligations which would be assumed by the new body. This meeting was called for December 5 and 6, 1906, in New York City, and was the first joint gathering of the two national organizations which had separately voted for union. The local Associations had been asked to make application for charter membership previous to the convening of the convention, and interest in the new organization was so great and belief in its possibilities so firm that at the beginning of the convention there were 147 city and 469 student Associations that had applied for membership. This list included all but three of the city Associations of the American Committee and most of their student Associations and almost all the Associations affiliated with the International Board which carried on an all-round program.

At this first convention, 392 delegates from 132 different Associations received the final report of the joint committee and started the new movement. Miss Dodge was elected president of the convention at its first session.

The new organization was called the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America, and its object was stated as follows:

> The purpose of this organization shall be to unite in one body the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States; to establish, develop and unify such Associations; to advance the physical, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual interests of young women; to participate in the work of the World's Young Women's Christian Association.[29]

A National Board of thirty members was elected as the executive body of the organization, to carry on its work between conventions, and was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York on June 7, 1907. Miss Dodge was elected president at the first meeting of the National Board immediately following the convention. During the next months details of organization were worked out, a staff was called, and offices were opened in New York City.

This new unity in Young Women's Christian Association work marked both the beginning and the end of important eras in its history in the United States.

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CHAPTER III

Recent Years—1906-1934

WITH the establishment of the new national organization and its continued development, the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States can be clearly identified as an institution in the terms used by William G. Sumner:

> An institution consists of a concept (idea, notion, doctrine, interest) and a structure. The structure is a framework, or apparatus, or perhaps only a number of functionaries set to cooperate in prescribed ways at a certain juncture. The structure holds the concept and furnishes instrumentality for bringing it into the world of facts and action in a way to serve the interests of men in society.[1]

Closely conditioned in its growth both by the obvious needs of women and girls seeking a livelihood outside their own homes and by the development of other social agencies devoted to specialized tasks, the Young Women's Christian Association was definitely the product of the intention to promote Christian ideals of life in the individual and in the community. Only very gradually did it build up both a philosophy and a series of concepts which have helped to give definiteness and form to this general purpose.

The relation of the continuing idea or concept of an institution to its developing framework and the values

given to each in the making of decisions seem to determine the degree of flexibility possible in changing programs.

The new national organization was a bringing together of the two main tendencies in Young Women's Christian Associations in this country—the more institutionalized service but devoutly Christian attitude of the International Board, and the strong fellowship and fervently evangelical tendency of the American Committee.

Opposing as these two tendencies may in some ways have seemed, both at that time and in later years, nevertheless they were really complementary, and much of the vitality and power of the present national movement can be traced to their interaction.

The newly elected National Board faced heavy and immediate problems. Unlike many national agencies whose organization has preceded the forming of local branches, this new national body found itself composed of 608 affiliated Associations with a membership of 186,330 women and girls. Of these Associations, 469 were in student centers with a membership of 41,688. In addition, the new organization took over the responsibility of the American Committee for the work of eleven secretaries in four other countries—China, India, Argentina and Japan.

Even though the first decade of this present century was half over, it was still unusual for women to assume heavy organizational responsibilities. Their ability to raise money and administer budgets was still questioned, by the women themselves as well as by men. Moreover, national and world organizations were far less common than twenty years later.

The emphasis of these early years of the now united national movements might be characterized as stabiliza-

tion, much of it in terms of organization and material equipment.

From the earliest years the leadership of the Young Women's Christian Association, both lay and employed, was committed to the belief that dynamic, in terms of spiritual power, and structure—that is, organization—were both essential. Careful plans were now made for training secretaries, building on the past experience of the American Committee in Chicago, which for some years had been recruiting and training its secretaries. Women were still self-conscious about a college education. Such training for life and work was only beginning to be accepted, and the number of women who had had this opportunity were few. Training for social work of any kind was even more at its beginnings, and the newly organized Young Women's Christian Association training school faced all the difficulties of any pioneering professional school. The question of standards for admission was puzzling. There was hesitancy to declare frankly the requirement of a bachelor's degree for entering the professional group, and the phrase "or its equivalent" was frequently used to qualify this requirement. There was the next question of an essential curriculum, and the problem of identifying Association techniques as well as planning for their teaching. To make and to begin to carry out such plans was hard, slow work.

Next to emphasis on the development of the trained professional secretary it appears that no one factor helped more to stabilize the movement as a whole than did the erection of Young Women's Christian Association buildings in all the larger cities and many of the smaller ones of this country. Association buildings date back much earlier, but it was not until after the organization of the present national movement that there was a widespread

idea that in any city of appreciable size the Young Women's Christian Association should have its own building and, if possible, a building erected for its particular purposes.

This main—or central, as it is frequently called—Association building is usually for administrative purposes and general activities, providing for a great middle-class group of women and girls facilities similar to those of a woman's club and often serving at the same time as a headquarters for many women's groups and interests. Some Associations combine housing and these other facilities in one building; others have separate buildings.

Even in those years of enthusiastic acquisition of property—and it was exciting, for women's groups in the past had had little opportunity to feel the thrill of ownership—there was recognition of the danger of confusing this outward expression of the Association with its essential reality in terms of membership. Statements such as "the membership is the Association" were in constant use, and warnings of the possibility of too great sacrifices, in terms of energy or even in terms of freedom of speech and action, for the sake of buildings were frequently heard. In the smaller communities—cities and towns as well as rural districts—the development of program irrespective of equipment was constantly stressed, together with the differentiation at this point between larger and smaller places.

From the development of its staff and the actions of early conventions it is apparent that the new national organization accepted as one of its primary functions the building up of Association methods and techniques to the end that a true cross-section of the girl and woman life of the whole country might find satisfactory place in the

Young Women's Christian Association movement. Women with experience and understanding of rural life, of the background of women and girls in industry, of the foreign-born and foreign-speaking, and with skill and originality in developing programs for such groups, were early added to the national staff, in addition to staff members responsible for work with students and younger girls, and for various subjects such as health, general and religious education.

This early emphasis on types of program not yet recognized by local Associations as within their sphere of activity was made possible by the fact that the burden of support of the new national organization was borne for nearly ten years by one individual, with only meager aid from the member Associations. The number of other individuals contributing, particularly to the foreign work, was, however, steadily increasing.

It will be remembered that the first Associations in this country were organized in cities. That then, only a few years afterward, the movement spread to student centers. It was some time before there was an even partially satisfactory development of the Association idea in smaller communities. Associations were organized from time to time in rural districts but usually with the characteristics of city or student work. Probably one of the most interesting forerunners of the present rural work of the Young Women's Christian Association came through the Eight-Week Club plan, by which college girls going home for the summer vacation organized summer clubs of girls in their communities. The programs of these clubs endeavored to combine recreation and educational features, often of a religious nature.

At the national convention in 1915 the large-town unit

of affiliation was recognized, roughly determined as a community with a population of between 5,000 and 15,000. This action was taken in the well-grounded belief that not until attention was focused on this type of community would there develop the kind of Association movement which could successfully be administered in such communities.

Thus at the completion of ten years of work the national organization found itself with some fairly satisfactory method of approach to nearly all the different kinds of groups of women and girls in this country, and with plans for further work which, though largely in their beginnings, nevertheless showed promise of success. The two outstanding problems for which no constructive solution seemed in sight were the questions of what membership in the Association really meant, and what particular place in the Association fellowship the rapidly increasing numbers of business and professional girls and women should occupy.

This period was marked also by recognition of the need for highly specialized services on the part of local Associations. The general Association worker who was a jack-of-all-trades, with corresponding limitations, was passing, and the trained worker with specialized academic equipment and experience was coming into prominence. There were now to be found on the rosters of local Associations, physical directors, religious education secretaries, cafeteria directors, educational secretaries, employment bureau secretaries, room registry secretaries, case workers and many other specialists, as well as increasing numbers of persons skilled in work with some particular class of girls—adolescents, girls in industry, and the foreign-speaking.

So acute was the consciousness of the need to make a specialized approach to different groups of women and girls in the community, that the work of these specialists was protected and emphasized by a departmental form of organization. Only in some such way, probably, could it have been possible to break through the conventional general approach of offering to women and girls, in a central location, facilities and activities on the basis of subject interests such as physical education, general education and recreation. This general approach made during the early years had resulted in a homogeneous constituency of the middle-of-the-road variety.

This homogeneity did not satisfy the Association leadership, and as they studied the situation it became evident that the most different groups—such as industrial girls, Negroes, the foreign-born—would not be reached by the Association without special efforts related to their own life-experiences and cultural backgrounds. This struggle, early deemed important, to make of the Association a true cross-section movement of all kinds of women and girls in the community, the nation and the world, has continued up to the present. Heterogeneity does not just happen; on a constructive basis of active comradeship it is a conscious and continuous process.

The tendency to identify the rigidity of departmental organization with the use of specialized personnel and programs was ever with the Association, but as appreciation of the newer methods of learning through experience grew, so did understanding of the necessity for recognition of real differences in life-experience, if leadership growth was to take place in the different types of girls and women who make up the Association.

In this period were the beginnings of methods of working with groups, methods that have proved their validity by their endurance. In 1908 the first federation of industrial clubs was organized in Detroit. This was a plan of work directed toward meeting the problems of industrial girls and helping them to develop leadership within their own groups through the use of self-governing clubs. In 1910 the first International Institute, a specialized service for the protection and welfare of immigrant girls, was organized in New York City by the National Board. This plan was characterized by the use of workers who spoke the languages of the major foreign groups and who had the training that enabled them to help to adjust to American life girls and women strange not only to the language but to the customs and conventions of the new land.

Negro women and girls had been for years within the fellowship of the Association. Here also the work had its beginnings in the Negro schools and spread outward to communities. Before the completion of the organization of the present national movement a study had been made of Negro schools, and a secretary for this work was immediately placed on the new national staff. It was not, however, until 1914 that a secretary for Negro work in cities was added.

The work with Indian girls and women, begun in 1892, had meanwhile slowly but steadily developed. From the beginning it was carried on in close cooperation with the Indian Bureau of the Department of the Interior, with the various church groups interested in Indians, with the Young Men's Christian Association, and with other agencies dealing with similar problems. By 1930 there were Associations in forty-one schools, with an approximate membership of 2,600. This work with Indian girls has had

three main features: the attempt to help in preserving and strengthening the foundations of character, so that a girl does not break under the strain to which she is subjected in adjustments to new situations; the effort to interpret to the girl the outside world which she must enter, its difficulties, its responsibilities and its attractions; and finally the developing of an adequate leadership for this new life upon which the race is entering. A change of later years is the attempt to follow the girls, as they leave school, into their work life in the towns and cities to which they go.

In the public mind, one apparently settled conviction about the Young Women's Christian Association is that it does and should house girls; consequently this work could not be neglected. Long and hard has been the struggle to organize residences on a self-supporting or, in the case of the larger units, on an income-producing basis, and to manage them in such a way that girls can be housed economically and happily. Much effort has been needed also to change the name of the housing unit from Young Women's Christian Association "home" to Young Women's Christian Association "residence," changing at the same time its connotation, which by the first decade of this century was that of a poorly run boarding house with many rules. As a result of this twofold effort the Young Women's Christian Association residence is today in most cities looked upon as a highly desirable place to live, and the Association itself is realizing its opportunity to influence the girls who live under its roof in their attitudes toward home making, group living and good citizenship.

At the time of the World War, communities became newly conscious of the needs of women and girls. The

Young Women's Christian Association, recognized as having had a wide experience in work with girls and women, was called upon to put this experience at the disposal of the whole country. Under a War Work Council, the total strength of the Association, locally and nationally, went into meeting the tremendous demands suddenly made upon it. Large sums of money were entrusted to it by the public. New responsibilities were assumed, such as the hostess house work in government camps, which included the foreign, or nationality worker hostess for the foreign-born soldiers and their even more foreign wives and mothers; and the provision of recreation for men and women in military communities. The recruiting and training of a corps of Polish-American young women who as the Polish Grey Samaritans were sent to Poland for reconstruction work among their own people and became the chief lieutenants for the famous Hoover relief work, must be recorded as one of the remarkable accomplishments of the War Work Council.

There was also a great growth in the social work of the Association. Room registries, employment bureaus, travelers' aid and case workers were all taxed to the utmost to meet the perplexing problems of this period. Women and girls were flocking to industrial centers for war work, or to the neighborhood of the camps for the excitement and interest to be found there or to be near their men as long as possible. And as usual, the Young Women's Christian Association was expected to house girls. In some cases emergency housing was built; in others, already existing buildings were taken over; and in a short space of time hundreds of girls were finding safe shelter under the protection of the Association.

In addition to the work carried directly under the juris-

diction of the War Work Council, grants of workers and money were made to local Associations to enable them to expand their programs and to meet more adequately the needs of the girls in their communities. Many women were attracted both to the secretarial and the volunteer leadership groups of the Association who had never before been interested in the Young Women's Christian Association. To some of them it was only a channel for war service; to others it became a permanent interest.

A predictable result of this war work was the strengthening of the national organization. The responsibility for war work and for cooperation with the government rested upon the National Board through its special committee, the War Work Council. Through the influence of the War Work Council new Associations were organized and many old ones were reorganized with a larger program than before, made possible by the greater financial resources at their command. Consequently, the national organization was placed in a position of prominence such as it had not before the war thought possible or perhaps desirable. At the same time there was revealed the increased strength brought to local as well as to national work through such closer working together. The Young Women's Christian Association had become in truth a national movement.

Two outstanding characteristics of the organization as shown at this period seem to have been great flexibility in adapting its program, its personnel and its equipment to new and varied needs; and the speed with which this was done. Even before 1917, when little or nothing was heard of the newer processes of education as applied to the Young Women's Christian Association, nevertheless the Association was accustomed to rely for its success upon the

resourcefulness of its personnel rather than upon any fixed program. In other words, the essential element in the Young Women's Christian Association was leadership, both employed and volunteer, and the particular program of activities for which that leadership was responsible varied greatly and was closely related to particular community situations. Therefore when the war came it was not too great a wrench to shift and expand these programs to meet shifting and expanding needs.

Meanwhile the International Institute movement for foreign-speaking women and girls spread rapidly, as city after city became aware, all at the same time, of the dangers, the obligations and the opportunities presented by the presence of large foreign-born populations of differing speech and differing political loyalties.

In 1917 the first conference of International Institutes was held in Pittsburgh. There were then eight fully organized Institutes with staffs of nationality workers. This number increased through the war period until in 1920 there were fifty-three International Institute branches of city Associations. These conferences have been continued ever since, meeting at the time of the national convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations, or as a kindred group of the National Conference of Social Work.

In the autumn of 1918 the various types of work with adolescent girls, carried on by a growing number of Associations since 1881, were brought together into the Girl Reserve movement. Much work had been done with adolescents, not only school girls but also younger girls in business and industry, so that from the beginning four separate groups of girls were recognized: the seventh and

eighth grade school girls, the junior high school girls, the older high school girls, and the younger girls in business and industry.

The Girl Reserve movement, representing the younger membership of the Young Women's Christian Association, is not only an adolescent movement for girls, national in scope, but also an integral part of the wider fellowship of the Association. It is in large measure to the girls who have been part of the Girl Reserve movement that the whole Association, including the student group, looks for future leadership. The response to a plan of work which has as its chief emphasis the developing of program out of the needs and desires of the group rather than on a standardized pattern has been encouraging and fruitful. In the two years between the starting of the Girl Reserve movement and the convention in Cleveland in 1920, the number of secretaries working with younger girls increased from 125 to nearly 500 and the membership from 20,000 to nearly 80,000; by 1934 this number had mounted to more than 325,000.

In 1919 the first national conference of industrial girls was held in Washington, D. C. Out of this conference grew the National Industrial Assembly which meets in connection with the national convention of the Young Women's Christian Association and holds together in a national organization the industrial girls throughout the Association. During the war period more than 300,000 women and girls employed in war industries were served by the Young Women's Christian Association, many of them through industrial service centers where the industrial girls and women shared equally with women of the community responsibility for the policies and program of

work. This experience did much to develop the leadership of industrial girls and women to the point where they were able not only to carry positions of responsibility within their own groups but also to meet on equal terms with the rest of the leadership of the Association.

In 1919, also, the national Young Women's Christian Association helped to form a separate organization for business women called the National Federation of Business and Professional Women. This seemed a necessary preliminary step in order to determine just what was the field of responsibility of the Young Women's Christian Association with business and professional women and girls. From the beginning of the organization of the Young Women's Christian Association a large part of the membership, particularly in city Associations, had been made up of business girls who desired to avail themselves of the privileges provided by the Association, and even before the war there was increasing effort to get the more experienced business women to take responsibility on boards and committees. Following the organization of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women the Young Women's Christian Association determined to focus its program on the younger business girls and to work with them as a group having definite occupational interests of their own, differing from those of industrial girls and from other groups in the Association.

This same year, 1919, the first building put up expressly for colored women and girls was opened in New York City. This marked the beginning of the effort to provide in those cities where the numbers of the Negro population warrant it, equipment equal in attractiveness

and variety to that provided for white groups, and increased opportunities for colored women to develop leadership within their own ranks.

During this period student Associations also developed rapidly. The exceptional character of the campus as a type of community was recognized, as well as the fact that the total membership of a student Association changes each year and that consequently continuity of leadership or of program, if the Association is to remain in the hands of students, presents a difficult problem.

During the war years, when increased sums of money were available, specialized work for students in various fields was developed through the national organization, particularly with nurses, professional students, and foreign students in the United States. Some of this work was carried through local Associations but in the main the development was dependent on the national Young Women's Christian Association. As national funds grew more restricted, parts of this work were given up, until in the later nineteen-twenties the student movement was again back to the place where almost its entire emphasis was upon developing the undergraduate Associations in the colleges and the universities.

A significant aspect of the relationship of the student movement to the whole Young Women's Christian Association was shown by the action of the 1922 convention, which gave to the student Associations the right to conduct their business in a Student Assembly, with the proviso that a report be made to the convention of matters which required the action of the convention. The aim of student Association work is expressed in the following statement:

> The ultimate aim of the student Association is for each girl to have an experience of God that transforms her life. Some girls arrive at such an experience subjectively and find expression for it through response to the challenge of interracial or industrial relationships. Some girls first reach the experience objectively, as they find their place in helping to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth through work upon some problem which compels their best and for which they find themselves inadequate without a relationship to God.[2]

Again, in the report to the 1934 convention the statement is made that "religion—the Christian religion—is the emphasis of the National Student Council." [3] This report also points out the continuing importance of maintaining a movement *by* students rather than a movement *for* students.

The work of the Student Council of the Young Women's Christian Association has always been done in close cooperation with the Student Council of the Young Men's Christian Association. Over the years, as this cooperation has grown and taken form in a joint committee called the "Council of Christian Associations," the question has repeatedly arisen as to the separation of these two student movements from the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations to form in the United States, as is the case in most European countries, a separate and independent student movement. The closeness of relationship between the two student movements has shown itself in joint summer conferences, many joint meetings of other descriptions, the issuing of literature by a joint committee, and similar projects. The desire for independence of the women's student movement has apparently been much less since the convention action giving almost complete authority in student affairs to the Student

Assembly. Control is exercised by the National Board over student matters in the interim between assemblies only at the points of the size of the national student budget, national personnel, and such central policies as purpose and basis. The student movement nationally is far from self-supporting.

In its work on local campuses the student movements of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations are closely related to the Student Volunteer Movement and to the work of the churches. The common objectives of these various groups working with students brought about, in 1934, the organization of the National Commission on Consultations About Student Christian Work. This commission, representative of the six groups principally concerned, namely: the university and college administrations; the churches; the student Young Women's Christian Association; the student Young Men's Christian Association; the Student Volunteer Movement; and faculty, alumni, and friends, presented in March 1935 a progress report, and states as its first conclusion the following:

> In the light of the year's study it is the judgment of the commission that, if the conditions necessary to assure success can be achieved, a single unified Student Christian Movement in the United States is desirable. (One member of the commission dissents from this conclusion.) In the commission's opinion, those conditions do not yet fully exist.[4]

The report discusses at length the various sectional developments toward unity and problems of organization as well as the fundamental questions of philosophy, message and function.

The results of these further studies by the commission

are still uncertain. For women students the question inevitably arises as to the significance and values of a movement of women, which tends to mean that the values of a united student movement will be supplementary rather than a substitute for national Young Women's Christian Association relationships. This basic question of the place of women in community and national life affects both directly and indirectly all attempts at unity on the basis of message alone.

In 1922 the first national assembly of industrial girls met at Hot Springs in connection with the national convention. This was the beginning of a national movement among industrial girls which not only has furnished opportunity for the industrial membership of the Association to discuss its problems and plans on a national basis but has done much to interpret this particular part of the membership to the whole.

Two years later the first national assembly of business and professional women in the Young Women's Christian Association met in connection with the national convention in New York City. By that time the Young Women's Christian Association had apparently gained a sense of direction with regard to its responsibility and opportunity in this particular field. The business woman, as has been said, has always played a large part in the development of the Young Women's Christian Association. It was not until after the war, however, that the Association became definitely conscious of the need to develop group consciousness among the younger girls in business and the professions and thus give them the opportunity to face together their common problems. This group of business girls has developed into a powerful part of the fellowship

of the Young Women's Christian Association. To the World's conference at Budapest in 1928 there were sent from the United States an industrial girl representing the National Industrial Council and a business girl representing the National Business Women's Council. It was the first time that official delegates from these groups had been sent to a World's conference.

This principle of diversity, illustrated by the development of these three movements, has not been easy either to reach or to maintain. Left to itself any local Association tends to become homogeneous and to slough off the most different parts. Years ago it was recognized that if the really different groups of the community, such as the women and girls in industry, the foreign-born who do not speak English, and the Negro girls, were to be a part of any Young Women's Christian Association it was necessary to make special provision for them. The careful plans developed for access to these groups have brought them into the fellowship of the organization nationally and to a considerable extent locally. Nevertheless, experience seems to show that it is necessary to be constantly vigilant if these more different elements are to continue to be an integral part of the whole and function naturally within the voting membership.

Money came easily during the war years. To spend wisely and well was the problem, rather than to do without or to save. But as early as 1920 this situation was changing rapidly. With the war over, the enthusiasm for service and for sacrifice was gone. People were eager to turn their time and their attention to their own affairs, to forget the horrors of the war years, and to lose themselves in a round of intensive personal activities and in-

terests. Social organizations like the Young Women's Christian Association saw not only their money coming in ever more slowly but also a rapidly decreasing corps of volunteer workers.

The national organization as well as local Associations found themselves at this period with a greatly expanded program, with communities expecting far more than they ever had in the past, and with diminishing resources. For local Associations the trend toward federated financing, or community chests as it was more commonly called, did much to answer their financial problems. Reduction was still necessary, but, using in many instances the machinery of the old war work campaigns, the new community chests did stabilize and put a firm foundation under local social agencies, including the Young Women's Christian Association.

The reports for these years show an increasing emphasis upon relationships with other organizations. Always closely allied with the Young Men's Christian Association, having sprung from the same roots and with similar purposes and ideals, nevertheless the Young Women's Christian Association now began to find itself frequently involved in problems of relationship with this organization. Until this time the differentiation of Young Men's Christian Association work for men and boys from the Young Women's Christian Association work for women and girls had been sufficiently clear to prevent overlapping or conflict of interest, to any great degree. During the war, however, many Young Men's Christian Associations opened their doors to serve women and girls, partly because men and boys were gone and their buildings were not being sufficiently used, partly because women and girls

were demanding the same facilities and use of equipment which were available for boys and men.

This extension of work of the Young Men's Christian Association to include women and girls inevitably brought misunderstanding. In communities where there was no Young Women's Christian Association it was often assumed that such a department of the Young Men's Christian Association *was* a Young Women's Christian Association. In other places, particularly in smaller communities, the organization of a Young Men's Christian Association, with its demand upon community resources, while it did not include membership functioning of women seemed to prevent Young Women's Christian Association organization. It is this attempt, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the Young Men's Christian Association to substitute activities for women under their leadership for the Young Women's Christian Association, a definitely woman's movement, which seems to have led to the confusion still existing in the mind of the public in regard to the functions of the two organizations.

In this period also was the beginning of a closer relationship with other social agencies which were concerned with housing, community recreation, girls' group work and individual problems, and of a recognition of the importance of basic social technique and of kinship between the methods of the Association and those of other agencies, even though their schedule and purposes were different.

As the war period passed, the need was evident for programs that had both a sense of direction and continuity. Probably the most important aid in the development of successful program was the application of the newer educational processes to methods of work. In the early days,

programs were evolved out of the minds of the leaders, who sought through various means to impress upon their young followers the desirability of the objectives which these programs were designed to accomplish. In most cases the objectives were good, but seldom were they realized. Consequently the leaders were ready to join heartily in the experimentation of educationalists in producing a new set of principles for the guidance of program makers.

These principles rested upon the assumption that programs, to be effective, must evolve from the need of the group, and that the group itself must give expression to this need as its members see it and in terms that they themselves will recognize. This turn from programs handed down from above to programs drawn out of the constituent groups was quickly understood and accepted by the Young Women's Christian Association because the principles underlying this change were precisely those which underlay the rock-bottom objective of the Association—to associate women and girls of varied experience in carrying out a common purpose.

A part of this increased emphasis on the wider aspects of education was an appreciation of the value of the process. It was something of a new idea in the Association world that the way in which a program was made could be of as much value to self-expression and character development as the finished plan. To the secretary responsible, and to the committee, this effort to encourage growth intelligently was a far more painstaking task than to pass on patterns. The same conception of education that was growing in the world at large was present also in the Association—the conception that education is not to stuff with facts but to increase understanding. One educator has defined education as "the process, or combination of processes, by which a

child is helped to discover, at least partially, his own potentialities; the nature of the things and people which surround him, how they came to be the way they are, how they behave; those ultimate realities, of which words can only hint, which are the springs of courage, serenity, peace; and, finally, a method of correlating his world with himself and both together with the ultimates." [5]

A natural result of this conception was to focus interest on the individual rather than on the subjects taught in classes or in the meeting of unrelated desires. This change showed most clearly in the way in which the program of the Association began to take form. Programs involving groups grow out of the experience and the desires of the persons who share in them. Program in this sense includes both administration, as the method by which program takes shape, and content, as the subject matter which gives it depth and richness.

An example of this change is the fact that in later years there has been less emphasis on the self-governing club as such. Clubs are recognized as one of the ways of encouraging growth, but there is at the same time much experimentation with informal groups. This realization of the importance of the growth of the individual has been sufficiently long in the philosophy of work of some Associations, and particularly of some departments, to have produced much interest in developing a plan for record keeping which will make it possible for an Association to have some basis of judgment as to the success of the work being done, in terms of the character development of individuals.

Nor has the Association been content to apply these prinples only to program making. It has ventured out on even more unsurveyed fields in attempting to apply the same basic educational principles to its administrative processes.

At this point educators and school leaders had little to give, consequently the Association has been forced to pioneer efforts. Its leadership has worked on the problems of committee and board organization, of staff leadership, of the relationship of staff and volunteer workers. It has studied the making of agendas and the processes through which decisions are made and put into effect; it has experimented in building policies and program out of the contribution of many different persons and groups.

By these methods women and girls are being trained through participation in the work of the Young Women's Christian Association for the difficult position of responsible citizenship in the institutions of democracy. The policy of the national organization, the knitting together of the varied strands of national life, and the continual pouring into the hopper of work-to-be-done of the accumulated wisdom and experience of varied types of women and girls all over this wide country seem to be imperfectly understood and only in the beginnings of accomplishment.

Every Young Women's Christian Association in the United States, like all other institutions, was and still is directly affected in some way by the economic depression beginning in the late nineteen-twenties. Not only have heavy demands been made on Associations by their regular clientele, but their buildings have been in many places the natural centers to which other girls and women in need have turned or have been directed. Relief has been part of the program; in some cases through loans, in others through direct supplying of shelter, food or clothes. Effort has been intensified toward securing jobs whenever possible. Special emphasis has been put also on personal adjustment problems.

In most places there has been little recognition of the effect that unemployment has on women and girls. Apparently a large section of the public still thinks in terms of every woman's having a family group on which she can fall back in case of real need. The change from a rural civilization with spacious, even if inconvenient, homes, and food of some kind, to an urban civilization characterized by small family units, apartment-house living, and dependence for food and all other necessities on an earned wage, has been imperfectly realized by people in general. For many women and girls the Young Women's Christian Association is the only substitute for family protection. Keeping up the morale of the unemployed has been naturally accepted as one of the tasks of the Young Women's Christian Association, and free recreation, educational classes, vocational schools, and other activities giving opportunities for friendship and normal living have been provided by Associations all over this country.

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CHAPTER IV

The Woman Movement and the Young Women's Christian Association

THE Young Women's Christian Association came into being, in the United States, in New York City in 1858, at a time when women were beginning to feel the effects of their gradually increased freedom from household cares as well as an increased desire to use their new gains in education. One historian of this period points out that the great hardships and toil undergone during the pioneering period by American women were somewhat compensated for by improvement in their legal status in regard to their rights of property and also by the extraordinary freedom that they had. These results are attributed in the main to the general scarcity of women during this period.[1] Another writer describes this period in the following fashion:

> The advance of American women between 1833 and 1861 may be likened to an opening fan. In 1883 the ivory sticks have just parted, disclosing thin lines of color. During the next quarter of a century they spread wider and wider, revealing the high lights of an uncorrelated design . . . by the beginning of the Civil War one sees that there lies concealed in the still unfolded pleats a perfected pattern of beauty.[2]

In the years just previous to 1858 state women's rights organizations appeared in Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania,

Massachusetts and Kansas. Apparently there was no concerted action between the states and the growth of these women's organizations was a sort of spontaneous combustion out of existing circumstances. Many writers of this period have attributed the rapidly increasing advance of women into active share in affairs outside their own homes to the higher and better education of American women, an education which was taking shape in the early half of the nineteenth century.

At least one interesting woman, however, saw that in addition to education there must also be the opportunity to use it. This woman was Sarah Hale. In her book, *The Lady of Godey's,* Mrs. Ruth E. Finley quotes her as saying: "There can be no education without leisure, and without leisure education is worthless." [3] Mrs. Finley continues to comment that this belief was back of every "fight she made for women, back of the great magazine she edited. It was the formula of her service to her sex." This same book tells of Mrs. Hale's interest in all the various labor-saving devices for the household that were appearing in those early days, such as a "double skillet for boiling milk," a particularly useful "rotary egg-beater," and other equally helpful contrivances. The sewing machine was also a great saver of labor, and all of them together reduced by many hours a week the time that a woman needed to give to housekeeping. A recent writer emphasizes the same points in saying: "Recent social movements, of which the Woman's Movement is one example, have developed largely because of the extension of leisure to new sections of the community." [4]

The changes in the outlook and opportunities of women were not confined to any one class:

> Among the working classes, the women who labored for wages got a certain amount of money they could now call their own and by their expenditures helped to give a trend to taste, at least in mass production. In the middle orders, especially the more prosperous ranges, thousands of women, escaping completely from the grind of factory, office and kitchen, secured leisure and means for reading, traveling and social undertakings. Supplementing these economic resources was the system of inheritances, which by giving wives and daughters control over large estates, set many of them free to follow their whims, to patronize artists, musicians, lecturers and writers as few had done heretofore, except in the case of queens and other ladies of high degree, to indulge in amateur excursions on their own account. Under various pressures, therefore, the gravity of women's interests steadily moved from the center of the family outward toward the periphery of that circle where it merged into the larger humanities.[5]

Such a situation of relative economic independence as well as increased leisure fostered the growth of organizations of women, organizations of many kinds—the Monday Clubs, the Shakespeare Coteries, Browning Societies, and many others. To some of these women the appeal of a religious organization, particularly in view of their almost absolute exclusion from the control side of organized church work, was strong.

It seems natural that women with the wider educational outlook and with at least some time to spend in ways of their own choosing should look for a means of self-expression outside their own homes. The widespread evangelical revival of the fifties in the Protestant churches brought, moreover, to the women of those churches an incentive to

spend themselves for worthwhile ends, that is, the end of the salvation of individual souls.

In the large cities the need was very evident. Women and girls were coming from the smaller communities to avail themselves of the increasing opportunities to earn their own living in some form of industry. These women were often in a pitiable condition. They needed a place to live. Many lodging-house keepers refused to take women, feeling that because of their insistence upon washing their own clothes and cooking their own meals they were too great a nuisance. Most of them were untrained for any particular work or service. To this extent, at least, it would seem that the Young Women's Christian Association was one of the concomitants of the increasing tendency toward urbanization.

R. M. MacIver in *Society—Its Structure and Changes,* points out that the effect of the city environment on the social life and attitudes of women is still an unexplored subject. He says: "It is obvious that the changes and functions of the family which the city develops have been of peculiar significance to woman, alike as mother, as wife, as housekeeper and as economic producer. It has limited her tasks and liberated her from the exclusiveness of domesticity." [6]

The question of to what extent the Young Women's Christian Association can be considered a part of the so-called woman movement is one open to much speculation. Its responsibility "as women for women" is constantly emphasized, particularly its responsibility, as a group, for putting the necessities of women first. The Boston Association was organized in 1866, but the desire for it had come a number of years earlier from a group of Christian

women who, when they consulted their pastors, were given the answer that something must be done for boys and men first. That attitude has threaded down through the decades even as late as the economic depression of 1929 and the following years. It is apparently not that men or people in general do not consider the welfare of women important; they merely consider it of less importance than the welfare of men and boys, and therefore when a choice must be made between the two, the work for women and girls is sacrificed. The particular group of women who formed the Young Women's Christian Association were determined that the interest of women and girls should be uppermost in their minds—but it was not their only interest.

Their final goal seems to have been the welfare of people in general, though they considered their direct responsibility to be for women. As has been noted (page 14), as early as 1876 questions like this arose: "Is it well for Young Women's Christian Associations in new towns where there are no reading-rooms for young men, to open their rooms to young people of both sexes?" [7]

Even though there was increased leisure, apparently there was criticism of women's spending time in Association work. Mrs. Davis, president of the Cincinnati Association, at the annual meeting in 1869 spoke as follows:

> Christian women are feeling more and more strongly that they should devote themselves less exclusively to the mere externals of life, and that they should occupy at least their acknowledged legitimate field, that of caring for the less fortunate and less happy of their own sex. . . . It is not likely that anyone whose conscience is so tender that she cannot resist the command to "go about doing good" will ever

neglect the nearer and more binding obligations she assumes as wife and mother and friend.[8]

The same lady two years later pointed out the satisfaction inherent in a work looked upon as worth while by its doers. "Ladies whose easy circumstances have liberated them somewhat from the exactions of housekeeping are becoming more and more conscious of the fact that life is too valuable to bestow it all upon the routine of social and fashionable duties." [9]

In endeavoring to help girls to find work in cities and to have also a normal, happy personal life, these women evidently encountered prejudice against girls' working outside their own homes. In 1879 an article entitled "False Sentiment as to Work for Young Ladies" speaks as follows:

> A false sentiment has rendered it derogatory for a woman to be a business woman, for a girl to earn or appreciate dollars and cents, if she can possibly find a father, brother or uncle to support her. . . .
>
> Girls speak of it as a hardship if they are obliged by stress of circumstances to earn a support.[10]

It was not merely the question of social status with which the Young Women's Christian Association had to contend. There were misgivings about woman's mental and physical ability. Not long after the typewriter was invented, in 1873, the New York City Association organized the first typing class of which there is record. Eight girls registered for it, but immediately questions arose. The records show that the education committee of the Association discussed for a long time the physical danger of so arduous an undertaking. Finally the decision was

made that there should be a thorough physical examination of all applicants and that those who passed such an examination satisfactorily would be given a trial. The opinion was expressed, however, that the female mind and constitution would be certain to break under the strain of a six months' course in stenography and typewriting. It is good to note that the records state that the class of eight was graduated without a single casualty and placed in positions.[11]

The demand for "female typewriters" was immediate. A number of business firms in New York felt that it was more satisfactory to have their letters typewritten than written by hand. About the same time a speaker at the conference in Cleveland, in 1879, made this statement: "The fact is now acknowledged, that a woman can acquire as nice mechanical methods as those in use among masculine skilled workers. Her capacity is limited only by her endurance," and then goes on to say: "But there is one field of work in which woman can never be misplaced, which ensures to them comfort and commendation. That field is the home." [12] These statements were made in connection with a speech on training women for work outside their own homes. It outlined in detail the work of various private and public institutions for teaching cooking, household management and dairy work.

In those early days the women in the Association found it possible to see humor in some of the statements or advice given to them by men. In an article on "Rules for Lady Travelers" the following advice appears: "Under all circumstances endeavor to retain presence of mind. One who can do this will never have any trouble traveling; and instead of its being unwise for women to travel alone, I think it an advantage to them to make trips alone." [13]

Some months later an article, evidently a burlesque, appeared in the same magazine, making such statements as: "Address the conductor every ten minutes. It pleases him to have you notice him. If you can't think of any new question to ask him, ask him the same old one every time." "Be sure you know where you want to go before you get on the train." [14]

Women's lack of training for earning their own living has apparently been another matter of great concern to the Association. In 1883 the following recommendations were made by the same Cleveland conference:

> Resolved: That this conference do earnestly recommend to the mothers in our land the great importance of training their daughters to some profession or employment, whereby they can earn their livelihood should sudden reverse of fortune take place.[15]

There seems little or no evidence, in published records, of interest in or attempts to gain opportunities for women that should be equal to the opportunities for men. Instead of an emphasis on equal rights, the emphasis was on the development of woman as a personality and the assumption of responsibility by the more privileged women for the less privileged, in this quest. Statements that show this sense of responsibility were constantly made: "This work of women for women so recently begun . . . has grown to be an enormous work with grand and glorious results." "It is woman's faith in woman, and woman's faith in God that has enabled us to organize." [16] A young college girl, in speaking to a state convention in 1890, expresses the same point of view: "If, then, girls owe so much to one another simply as girls—simply as girls who have not yet taken on the deeper, grander obliga-

tions of Christians—what then shall I say that girls of the Young Women's Christian Association owe one another?" [17] We see, too, the desire that women in the Association should remain womanly. Such exhortations as, "Let us be womanly, let us be thorough," are common in speeches and reports. By 1894 women were evidently beginning to feel that they had made their way in industry. One statement says: "There is no reputable profession, trade or employment which men engage in, in which women have not shown ability to labor also, and to succeed." [18]

The consciousness on the part of the leaders of the Young Women's Christian Association of their work as women for women is always evident. The following statements are typical: [19]

> The Young Women's Christian Association had, she said, been the pioneer in all organized work by women for women; it was the pioneer in all religious and philanthropic work, the leader in educational effort for self-supporting women, with a platform the broadest yet occupied by women.
>
> Noble women the world over were more and more coming to join the fight for truth against error, virtue against vice, for right against wrong; willing to be, even, for truth's sake, misunderstood and to suffer, if by any means they may help their sisters in need. The watchword of the Association was service for others for Christ's sake. Their aim, the uplifting of all women, spiritually, mentally and physically.

The leadership of the Young Women's Christian Association has apparently felt from the earliest days that women could understand women far better than men could. In an article in 1878 in *Faith and Works*, the state-

ment is made about a hotel run by men for working women in New York City, that "no one man is wise enough to prepare rules for the government of a thousand women." The article, entitled "A Gigantic Failure," seems to take some pleasure in analyzing the reasons why this hotel was a failure. The reasons given are that the fittings, carpets and so on were out of keeping with the moderate dress a working woman can afford to buy and no woman likes to appear shabby; that the rules were too stringent and "made the hotel not a home but an asylum." It points out that the fact that the women living there were not allowed to have "pictures, birds, plants, extra pieces of furniture" and above all, "sewing machines and trunks," was largely responsible for the scheme's failure. Then the highly practical question is asked, "Why was it opened in the spring when women had made engagements from the fall until summer with their boarding houses?" [20]

Many of the conceptions of the Young Women's Christian Association have centered about the home and woman's place in it. This phraseology has apparently not aroused in this particular group of women the antagonism that it aroused in the women directly concerned with women's rights. Rather they have gloried in the fact that their strong point was in preserving the home and in influencing future generations. Their insistence came at the point of extending that influence into the world at large instead of confining it to the one home of which they were a part. One of the main incentives to the Young Women's Christian Association to open boarding homes in cities was the fact that the existing commercial homes did not wish to take women. Again, the opening of various educational classes was due to the fact that women could not find such educational opportunities in other agencies of the com-

munity, public or private. It would seem as if the right of women to develop along their own line was the right which seemed most important to the leaders of the Young Women's Christian Association. Their commitment from early times, and recorded in convention actions from 1910 down, was to industrial legislation for the protection of women. This put them outside the equal rights group as such, and has tended to build interest in working conditions per se rather than as confined to women.

While the leaders in the Young Women's Christian Association showed an interest in public affairs long before 1919, as is shown by the records of conventions, nevertheless the passing in that year of the nineteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States, giving suffrage to women, did increase their direct interest in and responsibility for citizenship and the molding of public opinion. The following statement appears in the report of the 1920 convention:

> Through the experience of the last five years women have discovered their potential power in public affairs, and with the granting of the franchise there has come to them the responsibility for active participation in the life of the body politic. Many women are not as yet prepared to meet these responsibilities. Many have need of guidance in adjusting their private lives to the challenging demands of full citizenship. There is necessity for careful study of the contribution which women can bring to national and international problems. Therefore,
>
> It is recommended that the Young Women's Christian Association use its resources to further the preparation of women for responsible citizenship and to direct their energies toward the achievement of social righteousness.[21]

From the records of the national organization it seems evident that nationally the Young Women's Christian Association was fully conscious of itself as a woman movement. The following statement appears in the report of the Fourth National Convention in 1913:

> We have a woman movement; this is woman's hour: these are expressions so trite that we hear them in our very sleep; even the magazines are full of them. What is it all about? A friend said the other day that it simply means that everything that woman has been doing has moved out of the home; education first, then most of our religious institutions, and now all our little infant industries have gone out of the home and women have followed, and in a very profound sense of the word our women are "away from home." This is true not only of wage-earning women but of other women also; even if they spend their days in the four walls of their houses they are away from home as far as the old meaning is concerned. What does this mean but that this community into which they have gone out shall be made homelike? First, women have found that they are not safe out in a community. They find they have to become adjusted to a new order, their sense of values is distorted, there is danger of their losing their bearings; so it is not strange that many women are bewildered and that the word "uneasy" is applied to them.[22]

Here again the conceptions of home and family were used to point out the place of the organization in the community. In a report of the fifth convention, in 1915, the statement is made that at a world's conference the previous June, where twenty-five nations were represented, they were all talking about woman's awakening. The following comment was then made:

What is it that we are awaking to? Well, a great many things that time would fail me to mention. But for our purposes this afternoon it is enough to draw attention to one of the most significant; we are awaking to one another. Illustrations are numerous. An outstanding one, of course, is that if there is a new consciousness of that most ancient of evils, in the last analysis, in the end of the day, it is because women at last know something about one another, are awaking out of their ignorance of one another.[23]

In that same report an attempt is made to state the place of the Young Women's Christian Association in this particular movement of women as follows:

Ours is a movement of women. It seems to me there is no more pertinent question—it is a very solemn question—for us to ask ourselves here at the very beginning of this convention than this: What has this movement of *ours* to do with the stirring of the women of the world? There are many movements in the world; is this but one movement the waters whereof are sweet, but with no perceptible influence upon the stream, or does it avail to shape the course? Has it power, can it become dominant? Is it presumption, or is it our responsibility to ask ourselves whether it can do that and whether it ought to do it?

What are some of the reasons which give us some right to expect that this particular woman's movement should or may shape the trend of the stream in this nation? First, it is the Church's stake in the whole woman movement. Second, it is a movement of all types of women; all communities are represented in it. Third, it is perfectly sure of its goal, and many of these streams are not. Fourth, being a Christian movement, it is to be expected that its vision should outrun that of any other.

Women's problems have ever been the job of the Association. A particularly interesting phase of this has been

the attempt to face the question of the health of women. In the report to the Sixth National Convention in 1920 the following statement is made:

> The traditional attitude of women toward health has been one of the greatest bars to economic and social progress. The acceptance of the medieval teaching of women's physical incapacity has been at the root of the failure to inspire both men and women with a sense of responsibility for superb physical fitness. The Association is bending its energies to eradicate from the minds of women the old attitude by practical demonstrations of the possibility of overcoming physical handicaps and establishing health as a practical instead of a merely theoretical norm.[24]

This particular point of view in regard to health is, according to the reports, the background against which the health education work of the Young Women's Christian Association in local communities has been done for the past fifteen years. To the extent that health becomes the accepted norm for women, much has been added to the possibility of their taking successful part in the everyday life of business and industry.

In looking back over the years it seems plain that the Young Women's Christian Association has considered one of its first responsibilities to be that of knowing and understanding women and of making their interests, needs and desires its first and paramount responsibility. With such a point of view as a groundwork, the leadership of the Association apparently has been willing to give consideration to any question or matter which affected the lives and interests of women and girls. As expressed in program it runs the gamut from providing a safe and reasonably priced place to live, through offering educational and voca-

tional opportunities, to helping them to meet their responsibilities as citizens and the many questions of their personal adjustment, as in relationships between boys and girls, family relationships, the advisability of a married woman's working outside her own home. Again and again, too, it comes back to the subject of international relations and world peace as being of peculiar interest to women and one in which their responsibility is great.

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CHAPTER V

Religion and the Young Women's Christian Association

THE Young Women's Christian Association, as one of the social institutions related to the church and with its own Christian purpose, has been confronted again and again with the conflict between tradition and the growth of new ideas. Because of the hold that tradition has on religion, it is not strange that such conflict should have struck more directly at the roots of this organization than in the case of a secular agency.

These crises have centered about the form and wording of the so-called basis of membership, that is, the test for determining voting power and office-holding in the membership. In the description which follows it is clear that change itself was feared, so strong was the feeling of loyalty to the past, and that this fear made it difficult to judge any proposals for alteration on their merits alone. The fact that the Young Women's Christian Association is very largely a movement of young people made inevitable the recurrent upspringing of new ideas or at least the attempt to phrase the old in the terminology of the day.

In the year 1858, the year in which the first Young Women's Christian Association in the United States was organized in New York City under the name of the "Ladies' Christian Association," a widespread religious revival, overstepping denominational lines, began. The *Schaff-*

Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge makes the following statement in regard to this revival:

> Very marked, also, was the wave of spiritual grace, that, beginning in the city of New York early in 1858, shortly after a season of widespread bankruptcy, spread from city to city, and town to town, all over the United States, until, within a single year, nearly half a million of converts had been received into the churches. It was confined to no denomination, no section and no one class, in the communities where it prevailed. It was a great and wonderful revival.[1]

In speaking of this same revival, Miss Elizabeth Wilson in *Fifty Years of Association Work Among Young Women* points out not only that there was a great spirit of unity among Christians of different denominations—referring here to Protestant churches—but also that there was outstanding leadership of women at this particular time, and that one of the principal methods of revival was that of prayer circles.

The period was favorable to the formation of a lay religious organization unconfined by denominational lines. Added to that was the fact that young women were leaving their homes in town and country and going to cities to work in factories, thus creating a social problem which had never before been present. The invention of various machines for help in housework, such as the sewing machine and the egg beater, was also giving women homemakers more opportunity for freedom from household cares. We find converging, therefore, a combination of motive, need and opportunity for self-expression of the more privileged group of women.

From early records it is apparent that the religious life

of the newly organized Young Women's Christian Association tended to run in narrow grooves. There is frequent record of Bible study classes, of daily prayers in the boarding homes, of church attendance not only on Sundays but at weekday prayer meetings. In those early reports the test of the varied programs of the Association—programs of recreation, of housing, of educational classes—was largely in terms of how many of the girls thus reached became members of churches or could be reckoned as "conversions." A historian of that period points out that the life of the frontier, as well as American puritanism, was narrow and that these two strong influences in the life of this country made for a limited and intolerant spiritual life.[2] Limited it was in the Young Women's Christian Association, but intolerance does not appear.

The beginning of interest in the "female operative classes" was attributed to those revivals of 1857 and 1858 and this interest was in the early eighties stated as the primary motive in the organizing of the first Association, the Ladies' Christian Association, in New York City.[3] There were many attempts to work out a religious program that expressed a way of life based on the principles and teachings of Jesus. There was much groping after methods of expression; noon meetings in factories on weekdays and vesper services on Sundays, all of them accompanied by direct personal counsel, were the favorites. The religious meetings and the other activities of the Association were considered supplementary to the work of the churches, and the girls in the Bible classes at the Association were the same ones to be found in the Sunday schools.

There seems to have been relatively little change in these methods of religious education for nearly fifty years.

As late as 1905 it is reported: "That every Young Women's Christian Association shall have a gospel meeting or vesper service on Sunday afternoon is an accepted fact." [4] The question of church relationships was continuously important. Early records show that the Young Women's Christian Association for many years tended to be closely related to the Protestant evangelical churches. Its leadership was drawn almost exclusively from the active membership of such churches, and the favorite, almost the only, speakers at meetings from outside the organization were members of the clergy. It should be remembered that the various churches, with some differences between denominations, had given little opportunity to women for direct religious leadership, even though in 1852 Antoinette Brown Blackwell had been ordained a regular clergyman of the Congregational Church at South Butler, New York.[5] The Ladies' Aid responsibility for chicken-pie suppers and for furnishing the parsonage—another phase of "woman's place is in the home" related to church work—was considered their field of action.

Repeated statements are made in the various state and national convention reports as well as in articles, of the relation of the Association to the church. Such quotations as the following appear in the records of the early nineties:

> So long as there are young women who are not saved, and so long as the church itself does not put forth stronger efforts to reach them, so long will the Y.W.C.A. be necessary, so long will it find a place in the world.[6]

> Now may we not look on the Young Women's Christian Association, though not apparently under the government of the church, as one of the departments of its work? This

is surely the right view of it, and immediately dissipates any idea of antagonism between the two. The Association is, in a sense, a committee of the church, using certain well-defined methods to bring young women into the fold of Christ.[7]

The Young Women's Christian Association is an inestimable blessing not only to a city, but to every local church and pastor in that city. It is an example of redeemed and sanctified womanhood in quest of human souls. Such a spectacle in any community is an impetus in Christian endeavor.[8]

How is the Y.W.C.A. a needed help in the church? Especially, it seems to me, in two directions: First, as a feeder to the church membership. The Associations in colleges and cities have opportunities for touching thousands of girls whom the church does not, and in many cases cannot, reach.[9]

The Young Women's Christian Association is a holy and elect handmaiden of the church, designed of God to aid that institution in the salvation of young women. The entire life of the Association is an expanding and enlarging opportunity for the propagation of the divine principles which constitute the essence and inspiration of the church's activities.[10]

Some of these quotations imply a slight criticism of the church in that it is not reaching young women in large enough numbers, or that it does not provide sufficient opportunities for them to share in its responsibilities.

In 1894, the magazine called the *Evangel,* published by the American Committee, apparently went to considerable trouble to collect statements from various ministers in regard to the Young Women's Christian Association.[11]

Although the article does not say so, from the content it seems certain that the testimonials were solicited for this particular use and consequently, as is to be expected, are of a laudatory nature. They refer to the Association in such terms as, "It is doing a most blessed work in building the young women into the likeness of Christ"; it "meets so tenderly and beautifully a great want in its Christian thought of and care over young women without homes." Another says that "it is a great factor for righteous and aggressive Christianity." Another, that "there is not a single reason for the existence of a Christian Association for young men which does not exist with equal or greater force for such an organization for young women. If young women are less inclined to evil than the young men, they are more helpless and more pursued by temptation, and need not less but more of Christian care." Making due allowance for the purpose for which these quotations were secured, it nevertheless seems evident that many of the well-known clergy of the various Protestant churches at that time knew something of the Young Women's Christian Association and were sufficiently in sympathy with its aims and purposes to be willing to make statements over their signatures in regard to its work.

It seems also evident, from the precise wording of many of the statements from the leaders of the Young Women's Christian Association themselves, that they were careful not to imply any organizational relationship to the church. The word "handmaiden" is frequently used, and in a number of instances definite statements are made that there is no organizational relationship.

In the years between the forming of the second national organization—the American Committee—in 1886, and the coming together of the two organizations—the Inter-

national Board and the American Committee—in 1906, the differences of opinion that arose are entirely differences in point of view about the necessity or lack of necessity for precise theological commitments for leaders in the Association and for the local Associations themselves, corporately. The American Committee, greatly influenced by the Young Men's Christian Association and made up largely of students, though with some strong city Associations, stood out for a religious test that was rigid and theological in character. This test stated that an Association wishing to be a member of the national organization must limit its voting and office-holding membership "to young women who are members in good standing in evangelical churches," and that "we hold those churches to be evangelical which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and who was made sin for us, though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, as the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment." [12]

This definite statement is in contrast to the requirement of the International Board, which was: "All Women's Christian Associations, or organizations doing the work of such Associations, shall be entitled to representation in the conference." [13] Its general statements, appearing in reports of speeches made at conventions, statements as to the purpose of the organization and recorded in the minutes, all show in the conventional phrasing of the evangelical piety of the last century the orthodox and deeply spiritual point of view of the leaders in the International Board. Such

sentiments as the following appear frequently: "If each Christian woman would sincerely and honestly do what she can for the cause of Christ, how grandly that cause might prosper! what results might be attained!" [14] This group of the International Board assumed within the Association a certain homogeneity from the fact that women were willing and desirous of working together for Christian ends, and they disliked the idea of precise constitutional statements.

On the other hand, during all those twenty years there are constant indications, on both sides, of uneasiness at the existence of two national organizations with practically the same name and admittedly the same purposes. Their anxiety is referred in many instances to their feeling that such a state of affairs is "unchristian." They also point out, however, the sources of weakness in separation and the fact that each organization has much to contribute to the other.

After a long period of negotiation, extending over at least ten years and not unaccompanied by acrimony, the two organizations did vote during the year 1906 to disband and to reorganize as one new national organization. The International Board, in reporting the conference of 1905 at which their vote to disband their organization and form a new one was taken, makes the following statement: "The main disadvantage from the standpoint of the International Board is: That the International Board gives up its loyally held and much-loved liberty of basis, which it truly believes to be nearer to Christ's teachings." [15]

The joint committee that worked on the final details of the coming together of the organizations listed the advantages and the disadvantages, with the conclusion that the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. The advantages circled chiefly around the greater strength of a

united movement; the disadvantages around the concessions made in regard to the religious basis. The concession made by the American Committee was that local Associations already in affiliation with the International Board should be accepted on whatever basis they were already organized, without regard to the new national requirements. The concession made by the International Board was that from the time of the forming of the new national organization, with one year of grace allowed, no Associations would be admitted into membership that did not conform to the test of limiting their voting and office-holding membership to those members of the Association who were members of Protestant evangelical churches. It is interesting to note that the more liberal group, the International Board, made by far the greater concession to unity, a concession that did not solve the problem but did bring into the one national movement widely differing viewpoints on how best to conserve the Christian character of the organization. By some of the women who lived through these difficult days of controversy and compromise, special credit for the happy outcome is given to the forward-looking and earnest leadership of the Brooklyn Association.

The new national organization started out with the definite intention of emphasizing in all its work the religious purpose and program of the Association. One of the main channels for carrying out this intention was the curriculum of the newly organized National Training School. Grace Wilson in an article in the *Womans Press* for December 1932, called "Rooted in Religion," writes as follows:

> Bible study, especially the study of the New Testament, was considered fundamental, because through it one came

into a knowledge of Jesus Christ and an allegiance to Him as Saviour and Lord. Bible study was not an end in itself, however, but a means to an end, "the end of bringing young women into vital touch with Jesus Christ." So important was it considered that in 1907 a religious work secretary especially prepared in the study of biblical literature was added to the staff, and a few years later systematic Bible study with National Board certificates was introduced.[16]

Certainly the interest in directly religious programs in the local Associations remained unabated. Bible classes and mission study classes are reported by nearly all the Associations. The programs of the ten-day summer conferences, planned and carried out by the national organization in various sections of the country, were distinctly religious, in fact evangelical in character. The greater part of the program consisted of platform speeches on the philosophy of religion, essentials of the Christian faith, various phases of biblical history and similar topics. This was accompanied by Bible study classes and study of the mission programs of the churches.

Early in its history the Young Women's Christian Association became as an organization interested in missionary work, an interest which has been continuous ever since. Not only were the leaders, many of them, the same women who had active part in the foreign missionary societies of the churches, but their enthusiasm for their own newly formed organization led them to wish to extend to other countries this particular form of Christian service for women. This is another example of the close relation between the developing program of the Association and the program of the churches.

The Young Women's Christian Association has had a

tradition of pioneering, over the years. At certain points this pioneering spirit has been applied to religion as well as to other parts of its program. It is markedly evident in the attitude taken by the new national organization toward historical criticism of the Bible. Through its choice of faculty and the courses given at its training school the new national organization stood for and disseminated through its training school graduates all over the country a constructive attitude toward and intelligent use of historical biblical criticism. In the opinion of one of the early teachers in the training school, this has been one of the most significant contributions of the Association to the religious life of this country.

Miss Wilson makes the following comment in her same article, "Rooted in Religion," on the developing point of view of the Association in religious teaching:

> The whole approach shows a trend away from the doctrinal to an appreciation of the personality of Jesus and the significance of his life and teaching for practical living. Bible study helps make possible the "abundant life," but the abundant life is social as well as individual. Jesus is a "way of life" as well as a "way of salvation." There came a new interest in the historic Jesus, and with it a shift from the authority of the Bible to the authority of Jesus.

The early years of the new national organization were coincident with the growth of interest in social Christianity, often referred to as the social awakening. Referring to this period, Charlotte Adams, of the national staff, in an article on the underlying philosophy of the Young Women's Christian Association, writes:

> It was the period of the great social awakening when the responsibility of Christians for a more Christian social order

was proclaimed as an evangel. This developed into a crusade with its prophets and saints, among whom were some of our own number. The glow of the older evangelical flame was lighted anew, and in those early years there seemed to be the promise of the dawn of a fairer world by the arousing of Christians to the supreme task of devoting themselves to the application of the principles of Jesus to an iniquitous social order, thus helping to make the will of God more effective in human society.[17]

That the Association leadership seized eagerly on the content of the social gospel as preached by men like Walter Rauschenbusch is not surprising. Even in its earliest years the Association leaders had applied their idea of Christian teaching to the humblest tasks and the most practical programs of the organization, whether it was housing girls or vesper services or finding jobs. Their reason for so doing was rooted in their conviction of the value of personality and the responsibility of the more favored for the less. The form which this social religious philosophy took in the Association may be described as a desire to bring the

Christian point of view into everything the Association stands for in a community, to infuse into all programs and activities the contagion of the wholeness of the Christian ideal of life, to demonstrate the inescapable connection between religious ideals and daily practices, and to bring to bear upon the social order the compelling demands of a socialized Christian conscience. This is emphasized because it is a fundamental point of view of the Association in America, something which is indigenous to the life of American Christianity. But in stressing this social expression of the Association's philosophy, because it is so characteristic of us generally, it is not to be assumed that this is all there is to it, for there is another side which, while not so obvious, is

present nevertheless in our work. This is a concern for the individual girl as a person, who needs the help the Association can give her. Over and over again girls bear witness to this help and say that it is not to be found to the same degree anywhere else. Their home and work problems, their personal adjustment to life, their questions about religion are met and in some degree handled by the Association with increasing skill.[17]

This emphasis of the Young Women's Christian Association on social Christianity was closely related to the awakening conscience of the country in regard to the effects of the industrial order on individuals and the responsibility of the more privileged for the less.

> While theology was being forced to reform its verbal modes under the stimulus of science and secular philosophy, Christian ethics had to reckon with the thundering facts of the new economic order and with all the varieties of social thinking thrown up so profusely in the conflict of capital and labor.
>
> In opening Hull House amid the dreary industrial wastes of Chicago in 1889, Jane Addams likewise ascribed no small part of her initiative in the enterprise to "the impulse to share the lives of the poor, the desire to make social service, irrespective of propaganda, express the spirit of Christ—an impulse as old as Christianity itself."
>
> Whatever the dominant force behind this effort to cross the social divide, it exerted, beyond all question, a direct and immediate influence on American thinking about industrial questions and on the course of social practice.[18]

Such stimulus to social thinking, which came particularly from the colleges and universities, inevitably affected the Young Women's Christian Association, drawing, as

it did, the greater part of its employed leadership from young college and university graduates.

Meanwhile, along with this great interest in the application of the Christian ideal of life to social questions and the careful and constructive work of the training school in preparing its professional leadership to be teachers of the Bible, was the growing strength of the world's work of the Young Women's Christian Association. This World's Association and the World's Student Christian Federation with which the student section of the Young Women's Christian Association is united are both ecumenical in character and not limited to the so-called Protestant churches. The influence of the world point of view, together with the differences of opinion within the organization itself evident at the time of the forming of the new national organization and by no means dispelled, brought up anew the question of constitutional requirements for voting and office-holding membership.

This may seem a technicality without importance in view of the fact that even in the early days it was rare for an Association to limit the privileges of its programs and its activities in any way to any particular group. Nevertheless, in an organization such as the Young Women's Christian Association, membership-participating in character at least theoretically, and holding to democratic ideals of organization, any such restriction was an irritation to those who saw it as artificial and limiting. The attitude toward democracy in the Association was assuming greater reality. While from its earliest years the Association was, as has been said, theoretically membership-participating—that is, final authority rested in the voting membership, and the board of directors, elected by those members, held delegated power only, for the management of the affairs

of the Association—practically speaking, in many communities this board of directors was nearly if not quite self-perpetuating, and the privilege of voting was almost completely ignored or forgotten.

In many places part of the difficulty quite evidently grew out of the artificiality of the so-called church membership basis. Voting membership was determined entirely by membership in churches in or eligible to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, rather than by any test of belief in the purpose of the Association itself. The differences developing between church bodies, the organization of community churches that were of no particular denomination, and the increasing number of foreign-born girls and women in this country who were members of churches not eligible to the Federal Council made the question of differentiation between voting and non-voting members difficult. Chiefly this difficulty was met by ignoring it and either allowing everyone who happened to be at the annual meeting to vote by acclamation or by having a very quiet election in the morning with hardly anyone besides the board of directors itself voting. This was in the days before women had received the suffrage in this country and, moreover, when the trend toward self-government was much less important and less active.

At the national convention in Los Angeles in 1915 a recommendation for a change in basis for student Associations was brought in by a national commission which had been appointed to study this matter. This recommendation provided for any student Associations desiring it an alternate "personal" basis; that is, it substituted for the requirement of church membership a statement of personal commitment to the purpose of the Young Women's Christian Association. After prolonged discussion this recom-

mendation was passed.* As the national constitution at that time provided that changes in membership bases must be presented to and approved by two successive conventions, this method of administering membership could not be put into effect until passed by another convention. In the meantime came the World War.

This action of the convention, so brief to report, was indeed a significant one. To some it seemed to sever all connection of the student Associations with the church and to be the entering wedge for what they feared would become the practice of the whole Association. It was the old conflict between the conservators of the past and the inheritors of the future.

It is interesting to note that this first request for a change in basis came from the student Associations, the very group which in 1886 had insisted on forming a separate national organization because the existing national organization would not accept the limited basis. It should, however, be noted that the 1886 group of students was made up almost entirely of students from the middle west of the United States, a section more conservative in its religious expressions than the east.

Certainly the change from the strictly church basis was in many ways a momentous one. The clergy was invoked on both sides of the question and letters and statements were presented from those who appreciated the point of view of the student group in the Association and those who feared that the soul of the movement would be destroyed. The opposition of the conservative group was taken with great seriousness, yet the confirming vote at the convention in 1920, at the second reading, as then required, of the new student basis, was an overwhelming one. Many of

* See Appendix for full statement of this new purpose.

the older leaders, believing that the students should have freedom for their own development, did not by their votes oppose the student group, although they were deeply disturbed about the future of the organization.

It is rather curious, in view of the emphasis of Protestantism on the Bible as authority, that there should have been this extreme concern over giving up the use of the church as a middleman in determining the personal commitment of the leaders of the organization to the essentials of the Christian faith. In any case, this new personal basis was for student Associations only and was a permissive, not a compulsory one. Those Associations which still desired to do so could keep the constitutional form requiring church membership of its leaders. Changes had come in the United States in the years previous to this action of the 1920 convention. Tradition had lost much of its hold and the validity of the desire of youth for its own method of self-expression had gained recognition and influence.

From the reports made to conventions by the National Board in the early nineteen-twenties it seems evident that the lack of religious education programs in the local Associations after the war was a matter of concern to the national leadership. The question of promoting vesper services, which local churches took to be in direct competition to their own meetings, is mentioned several times. The gap between the religious thinking of the older and the younger generations was also a matter of concern, while in the cities the emphasis, following the war years, on the Young Women's Christian Association as a direct service organization to girls and women tended to minimize its emphasis on religious education as such. In reporting on

the situation in towns in 1924 the following statement appears:

> The religious situation in towns is not a happy one. When extremes of thought, belief, doctrine and teaching come together in a small area a universal problem is highly intensified. Can the Association hope to be an educational force in such a situation? Religious life as expressed in many town churches is making its greater appeal to the older generation. In some sections this appeal is at direct variance with the progressive spirit of the schools, so that young people are finding themselves out of harmony with the church life.[19]

In 1920, the report on work in rural areas states that there is almost "no religious training of leaders, no program for isolated individuals, and that few girls had joined the church as a result of Association work, most of those reached having been church members already and many of them church workers." [20]

At the same time that there was a distinct falling off in Bible study classes, in mission study classes, in vesper services, and in other direct forms of religious education, there was coming an attempt to make the Association corporately a Christian woman movement in the community. The following statement appears in the same report for 1920:

> It is time for the city Association to make effective socially the Christianity of its individual members. Its religious work bears an integral relation to its industrial and other special programs. The city Association has a real contribution to make not only in the development of individual character but also in the development of a Christian social conscience.

This social expression of Christianity was more difficult to make clear to the general public and to the Association itself than the conventional listing of Bible study classes, vespers and noonday meetings. Consequently the leadership frequently took refuge in the statement that the total program was religious and different in quality because of that fact. This generalization seems to have satisfied no one.

Meanwhile the national organization apparently felt it important to reword its convictions in regard to the Christian faith. The following statement appears in the report for 1922:

> In presenting this report, the National Board desires to reaffirm its confidence in the foundations of the national organization—
>
> *In Its Affirmation*—of the Christian faith in God, the Father; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord and Saviour; and in the Holy Spirit, the Revealer of truth and Source of power for life and service according to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the witness of the Church.
>
> *In Its Purpose*—to impel women everywhere to become followers of Jesus Christ; to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.
>
> *In Its Instrument, the Association*—a voluntary, self-directed organization, local, national, world; in which women may associate themselves and their service, thus ever increasing the amount of life they live in common.
>
> *In Its Special Relation to the Christian Church*—through its identification of interest with that great body of communions which have associated themselves in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.[21]

In 1924 the commission requested by the convention in 1920 to study the personal basis of membership in Asso-

ciations other than student, made its report, recommending a personal basis for those Associations which wished to use it. After a long discussion on the floor of the convention and the registering of distinct differences of opinion, the vote was taken and the recommendations accepted. At the convention in Milwaukee in 1926, for the second time and with much less opposition and discussion, they were approved and became effective.*

It was evident that the question of changing the basis of membership was to be a continuing one. At this same convention the student Associations asked for the privilege of rewording their basis which had been approved in 1920. Fortunately, by this time the national constitution had been so amended that by the vote of one convention such a change could be made. A new student personal basis was adopted at the 1928 convention * and immediately put into effect. In 1934, following a request made at the convention of 1930, a new personal basis was adopted for Associations other than student.*

As the personal bases were changed, the desire for simplicity and for non-theological language became evident. The first so-called personal bases adopted were highly theological in wording, and in the case of Associations other than student required that three-fourths of the boards of directors and officers should be members of Protestant evangelical churches. In the opinion of the leaders of the organization such a provision, definitely a compromise, was necessary in order to preserve the unity of the national movement. Threats of withdrawal on the part of the local Associations were repeatedly made. As a matter of fact, these threats were in no instance put into effect. During this time there was criticism of the vagueness of the Asso-

* See Appendix for complete wording of this basis.

ciation in regard to matters of religion. Why the "C" was not eliminated from the name seemed to be a favorite remark of those particularly critical, and the lack of tangible data in terms of numbers of girls who had become church members and were studying in Bible classes appeared to give anxiety to certain groups within the Association and, even more, to groups outside the Association. It is interesting and curious to note that constitutionally there has never been any requirement made of the employed staff either as to church membership or as to Association membership. From time to time the National Board has itself suggested certain standards, but they have not been constitutionally required.

Meanwhile, however, the Association was endeavoring to find a new way of approach to religion in terms of modern life. There was an emphasis on the corporate expression of religious ideals in community living which raised questions of responsibility in industrial, interracial and international questions. The matter of church relationships was ever uppermost. There seems no record of the Young Women's Christian Association's taking any position about the leadership of women in the church, and to its discussions and on its platforms it welcomed equally the proponents of women as members of the clergy, such as Maude Royden of London, and of those women of whom Evelyn Underhill of England is probably the best example, who stand for and exemplify the place of women in Christian leadership other than as ordained clergy. In personal conversation it has been repeatedly said that those women who did not find satisfactory self-expression in the housekeeping activities of the church found within the Young Women's Christian Association an opportunity for

constructive religious leadership which made for satisfactions in their own personal religious life.

With the changing character of the population of this country the increase in numbers of Roman Catholics in the big industrial centers brought up inevitably the relation of the Young Women's Christian Association to the Roman Catholic Church. With rare exceptions the facilities, programs and activities of local Young Women's Christian Associations were from the beginning open to women and girls regardless of creed or church relationship. In the early days there were one or two Associations that would not take Roman Catholic girls into their boarding homes. So far as it is possible to discover from the records, there has been for twenty years or more no such restriction in any community. There has been constitutionally, until very recent days, a limiting of voting and office-holding power to those members of the Association who were members of Protestant evangelical churches.

It is not easy to ascertain the religious affiliation of all those who use the facilities of the Young Women's Christian Association. From certain records kept nationally, such as the record of the church affiliation of attendance at national conferences, it appears that in recent years, that is, from the nineteen-twenties on, in certain of the industrial conferences, particularly in the northeast section of the country, it is a usual occurrence to have a large proportion of those present of other than the Protestant faith.[22] The World's Young Women's Christian Association, in its constitution, after a careful statement of basis and aim in theological terms gives as a principle that "the World's Young Women's Christian Association desires to be representative of all sections of the Christian Church in so far

as they accept the basis.* This basis is definitely a trinitarian evangelical one and not Protestant. It seems apparent, from conversation with individual men and women in this country, that the general conception of the Young Women's Christian Association is of a Protestant agency, and that even the fact of its long policy of not restricting its program and activities is not understood—an example of the fact that Christianity crystallizes in the shape of the creed or doctrine of some particular church, and a lay organization definitely Christian in its principles and aims but non-sectarian in character works from a viewpoint difficult to maintain and to make clear.

The national organization in the years between 1906 and 1916 placed great emphasis on training for religious leadership in its National Training School. Since that time a survey of the curricula of its seminars and training institutes would seem to indicate that the emphasis was turning to sociology, principles of social work, educational method, and the techniques of Association work itself rather than to religious leadership. On the other hand, it is evident, down the years, that the point of reference for new pieces of program, for taking part in so-called controversial issues, was repeatedly the reference of the Christian faith. The national organization in its reports, particularly to the conventions, is continually making statements about the Young Women's Christian Association as a religious organization, such statements as: "The Association today is challenged to a new religious advance." [23] "The program . . . calls for a reaffirmation and reinterpretation of the Christian philosophy of life in the fields

* See Appendix for complete wording of the World's Young Women's Christian Association basis and aim.

which this program emphasizes—health, work, family and sex relationships, citizenship." . . . "The quarter of a century of the life of the national Y.W.C.A. which has just closed has seen a movement of young women, rooted in the evangelical faith in the power of the living God made known through Jesus Christ to save and recreate human life, come to grips with the problems of our present economic society." [24]

At the 1930 convention the following program of faith and works was adopted for the coming biennium:

1. An endeavor to achieve clarity of thought and expression for our growing experience of God;
2. A continuing search for a deeper understanding of Jesus;
3. A thoughtful scrutiny of our Association practices and relationships in order to bring them into closer conformity to the law of love, and a more adequate recognition of the supreme value of human personality;
4. An effort to realize an ever-enlarging and ever more inclusive fellowship among women;
5. A giving of ourselves anew to help in the task of establishing righteousness upon earth.[25]

It does not appear in the report to the next convention that any direct endeavor was made to carry out those points.

Grace Wilson in her book, *Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Young Women's Christian Association*, points out that in her opinion the various changes that have come in program and in statement of purpose have not affected the fundamental purpose of the Association itself. She says:

> New factors, bringing with them new responsibilities, entered into the social situation. . . . The achievement of

> "fullness of life and development of character" necessitated a new understanding of psychological laws. The conception of religion, through which this fullness of life comes, had been changed. Yet it was fullness of life as it was found in Jesus Christ; and the Kingdom of God was that kingdom on earth of which Jesus talked.[26]

The emphasis on social Christianity was growing and constant. The steps that were taken in the fulfillment of the attempt to make real in the life of women and girls Christian ideals and principles are stated in detail in a later chapter. In the four years between 1930 and 1934, it is evident from the utterances of national leaders and articles appearing in the *Womans Press* magazine, that there was at least a desire to turn to an emphasis on the spiritual life of the individual as well as to continue to function in the realm of social Christianity. As one reads the records of meetings and speeches over the years, as well as actions of national conventions, there is apparent a strong cohesive power and a dynamic in the religious purpose of the organization, spread thin in places and expressed in the conventional terms of evangelical Christianity, but, to judge from its effects, real and powerful.

If one is attempting to weigh the reality of the religious life of the Young Women's Christian Association, perhaps one of the places to look is in the lives of some of its most prominent leaders. To mention only four, who are no longer living, there have been: Grace Hoadley Dodge,[27] the first president of the new National Board formed in 1906; Mabel Cratty,[28] general secretary of the National Board from 1906 to 1928; Florence Simms,[29] a member of the staff of the National Board from 1906 until her death in 1925, and the leader in Association work with industrial

girls; Clarissa H. Spencer,[30] a member at different times of the staff of the National Board and for ten years general secretary of the World's Young Women's Christian Association. These four, as well as countless others, showed in their lives and words not only commitment to the practical working out of Christian ideals of life but supreme devotion to God as revealed through Jesus Christ.

The way in which Miss Cratty summarized the report of the National Board to the 1928 convention only a few weeks before her death expresses clearly the problem which the organization faces in its attempts to be for this generation and this age a vital corporate expression of Christianity:

> The status of "the Association as a religious institution" is another major issue which the National Board asks the convention to consider. Is the modern Young Woman's Christian Association religious? It is a hard question, and not to be answered by pointing to Bible classes and numbers of girls and women in them, and certainly not by saying defensively that everything we do is religious. In general, younger members of the Association seem to be more articulate religiously than the older members. Why is the question asked often enough to make it impossible to disregard it? Is it that the Associations have, many of them, been spending so great a part of their time with buildings and large service programs, and consequent preoccupation with their administration, that the other functions of the Associations have had less exercise? Or are the Associations expressing themselves religiously in ways different, less formal, less conventional? Or is the Association simply having its share of the effect of the sharpening of the division between fundamentalist and modernist? It is very clear that there is a

sense of need, of discontent, a desire for a more adequate definition of our purpose in terms of its religious significance. In another section of the report this is set forth at some length, and references in the reports of every department show that it is common to all membership groups.

The final and really important question for the Association is what it is thinking of Jesus, how consciously it is following Him. Are its buildings visible expressions of the love of Christ, available to those who need them most? Are its programs his visitations to the colleges, cities, towns and hamlets of our beloved young nation and out to the uttermost parts of the world to which the Association has gone? [23]

The development of the Young Women's Christian Association in its religious thinking and expression brings out certain social concepts.

From early years the autonomy of the local Association and the advisory character of the national organization had been recognized. The only control exercised by the national organization was that of eligibility to affiliation with itself, and that eligibility, according to the national constitution, was stated exclusively in terms of the basis of membership, that is, the test for determining voting power and office-holding in the membership.

With the growing prestige of the national organization this power was considerable, and local Associations were loath to withdraw, even to insure freedom for themselves. The adoption, one after another, of a series of alternate bases for membership for inclusion in the national constitution was a definite victory for local autonomy and placed on the national organization the necessity for greater differentiation in the treatment of local Associations.

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CHAPTER VI

The Young Women's Christian Association and Its Foreign Program

FROM the earliest years the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States has shown an interest in and concern for similar work among women in other countries. The convention of 1871 recorded a visit from a member of the British Young Women's Christian Association, as well as a report of gifts and goods sent to India and China by Association members. This was presumably through church boards, as there was no Association work in those countries at that time. In the Association periodicals appear frequent letters from Association leaders in European countries—France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Great Britain. For some years also the Canadian Associations were officially related to the national movements in the United States. This official connection continued until the gradual forming of the national body of Associations in Canada, the Dominion Council, between 1893 and 1901.

The origin of the foreign work of the Young Women's Christian Association, that is, the attempt to promote a woman's undenominational organization in other countries, is to be found in the student Associations. In 1886 the organization of the Student Volunteer Movement gave impetus to the student interest in mission lands. Through the efforts of church missionaries and Young Men's Chris-

tian Association secretaries, mission student Associations were organized in the Orient. Financial contributions were made to this work through the Young Women's Christian Associations in the United States. It was not, however, until 1895 that a Young Women's Christian Association secretary as such was sent to another country. At that time Agnes Hill of Toledo went to India as an employed officer of the Young Women's Christian Association. Her financial support was contributed by the Toledo city Association.

Just before Miss Hill went to India, the World's Young Women's Christian Association was organized in England. The other countries represented were Norway, Sweden and the United States. Annie Reynolds, from the staff of the American Committee in the United States, was called as the first World's general secretary. This forming of the World's organization gave increased impetus to missionary efforts. While both the then existing national organizations in the United States were interested in the growth of Association work in other countries, the strongly evangelical character of the American Committee and the fact that the greater part of the student work was in that organization led to greater missionary activity on its part than was shown by the International Board.

In December 1906, at the first convention of the present national organization, thirteen foreign secretaries of the American Young Women's Christian Association were reported in service, of whom eight were in India, three in China, one in Japan, and one in the Argentine.

The policy of the Young Women's Christian Association in undertaking Association work in other countries was from the beginning that of offering assistance to those countries in developing their own work, particularly leader-

ship training, rather than of trying to develop an American type of work. The report of the convention for 1906 states as a policy: "That in sending local secretaries to another country where there is a National Committee, the direction of the work of such secretaries be under the direction of said committee while in that country." [1]

This policy of trying to develop indigenous work rather than to superimpose a pattern raises the interesting question of the geographical scope of an institution. It is the attempt to separate the idea or concept from the structure itself. The Young Women's Christian Association as it is today in the United States has grown out of the culture pattern and mores of this country. Being without pattern programs in any of its activities, its development is peculiarly dependent on its leadership. The extent to which representatives of that leadership can and do train nationals of other countries to have and use the same freedom in their own lands is difficult to estimate.

The foreign work of the Association in the United States has been carried on under the direction of the National Board on behalf of its member Associations. Because of this concentration of authority and responsibility it is easier to trace the development of policy and program than is true in the case of the diffused and unstandardized local work in the United States. In a careful report from the executive of the Foreign Department to the 1909 convention the statement is made that "the purpose of the Foreign Department is to be a contributing agency to the Association movement in mission lands. . . . The first function of the foreign Association is to unite Christians of various denominations and thus increase their sense of the strength of Christianity as well as their efficiency in the extension of the Kingdom. . . . The Association not

only strengthens the Christians but occupies a unique place in standing before non-Christians as a representative of united Christianity. . . . The second chief function of the foreign Association work is to reach certain classes of women who are outside the direct influence of missions and to bring those that are thus reached into touch with the mission churches. . . . The third function of the foreign Association work is to develop a sense of willingness on the part of the Indian, Chinese and Japanese women to assume responsibility, so that the Association may become self-supporting, self-controlling and self-propagating." [2] It is evident from these statements that the undenominational character of Association work was making an appeal in foreign lands as it had in earlier years in the United States.

The relationship of the Foreign Department to church mission boards has been very close, and the principle maintained has been that of waiting for the invitation of the church mission groups, or at least for their consent, before making any attempt to organize Association work. The main method that the Association has used during all these years is that of sending to foreign countries trained, experienced secretaries who were young enough to become somewhat familiar with the language, and of giving them as their chief responsibility the finding and training of woman leadership to carry on the Young Women's Christian Association. According to the resourcefulness and wisdom of these leaders sent from the United States, the programs in different countries have developed. These programs have been influenced by the conditions and needs of the country in which they have been undertaken. In some cases they have closely paralleled the work of the Asso-

ciation in the United States; in others there has been wide differentiation.

Student Associations continued their cooperation with the Student Volunteer Movement and many of the single women sent out by church boards, as well as those who went from the Association, were during their college years active in the Young Women's Christian Association.

The training of national leadership in the different countries included both those women who might become professional workers in the Young Women's Christian Association and those who would be board and committee members. As a part of this search for and training of leadership the Foreign Department as early as 1909 began to take a definite responsibility for getting acquainted with and rendering assistance to foreign students studying in the United States, particularly to oriental students. The attempt was not only to bring them into close touch with the Christian life of their colleges but also to help them to become acquainted with representative Christian women and to know at first hand something about the development of the Young Women's Christian Association as a women's national organization in the United States.

By 1915 there were thirty-two secretaries in the foreign field. Then came the World War and the increase in the money available for promoting the national work of the Young Women's Christian Association. Even before the United States entered the World War the Foreign Department, because of the influence of the World's Young Women's Christian Association and pressure from the Young Men's Christian Association, was facing the necessity for increased work. In January 1917 the following resolution appears in the minutes of the department:

> In order to gather up the suggestions that are coming in, and execute well and wisely plans for this larger work that should be done in Europe, it was [January 15, 1917]:
>
> RESOLVED: That the Foreign Department ask the Executive Committee to appoint a committee representing the work of the Young Women's Christian Association throughout the country, with a view to widening the scope of the work so as to include all women and girls in the warring nations.[3]

Then came the entry of the United States into the war and the organization of the Overseas Committee of the War Work Council. From then until October 1920 the work in Europe was the responsibility of the War Work Council. The regular work of the Foreign Department was growing, however, carried along on the same wave of expansion that was bearing the whole organization on its swell. In 1916 there were under the Foreign Department forty-seven secretaries in five countries. In 1917, twenty-two additional secretaries were sent out to the foreign field; in 1918, nineteen secretaries; in 1919, thirty-one secretaries; in 1920, forty-one secretaries; in 1921, fifty-seven secretaries. This does not include war workers under the Overseas Committee of the War Work Council in Europe or the Near East. This expansion of work was mainly in China, Japan, India, and the countries of South America. Consideration was being given at this time to requests for organization from Mexico and the Philippines.

In October 1920 the Overseas Committee of the War Work Council was consolidated with the Foreign Department under the name of the Foreign and Overseas Department. At that time there were 118 secretaries in thirty-two centers in the Orient and South America, and a some-

what larger number of staff in fifty-nine centers in Europe and the Near East. The numbers were changing so rapidly through transfer and demobilization that they could hardly be counted even for any one day. This uniting of effort brought an added reality to the new department, which had to face difficult international problems, and did much to transform the earlier "missionary" conception of its work into an enlarged vision of the possible functioning of a world fellowship of women with a Christian ideal.

Much was still to be done, however, not only in other lands but also in the United States, to forward the growth of a common understanding of the Young Women's Christian Association and its potential influence in world affairs. Up to the war period and even later, each national movement of the Young Women's Christian Association developed largely according to its own needs and desires without reference to other national movements. Nevertheless, in all these varied expressions of the Association idea there was emphasis upon the fellowship experience gained through associating women and girls of all groups for a common purpose—abundant life for all—and the planning of a program which should not only offer increased opportunities to the individual for her own development but also take into consideration and strive to affect for the better the environment in which she lives and works.

The aim of the Foreign Department was no exception to this. Its endeavor had been to build movements that would eventually be self-directing and self-supporting. To that end the American secretaries sent out were chosen primarily because of their ability to develop leadership. This was equally true of the overseas work of the War Work Council. Consequently the merging of the Foreign

Department with the Overseas Committee was carried through without difficulty.

Owing to the concentration of interest on Europe during the World War, the Young Women's Christian Association's work in Turkey, India, China, Japan, and the countries of South America expanded less rapidly than the newly organized work in Europe. Nevertheless, between 1915 and 1920 the staff in those countries increased in number from thirty-two to ninety-seven, with a corresponding increase in the number of centers of work.

About this time scholarships at the National Training School in the United States were provided for a number of foreign students. In 1920 and 1921 there were six such students from China, Japan, Russia and Bulgaria, and in the next year four from China and Belgium. All this work was closely related to developing the leadership of nationals in the various countries. The practice of giving scholarships to foreign students was continued until, in 1930, the National Training School gave up its full year's course of professional training. Since that time there has been gradual development of an exchange plan which brings young professional Association leaders from other countries to the United States for a period of service in one or more local Associations and sends secretaries from this country to other national Associations for experience in their local methods of work. This plan is only in its beginnings but it has been taken up with enthusiasm and has already increased the sense of world relationship among Associations in the United States. In some cases the plan of training on the job is combined with professional study either at Young Women's Christian Association seminars and institutes or in some school of social work.

Since the discontinuance of the work with foreign students, under the National Student Council, the Foreign Division has also found it necessary to put additional efforts into contacts with women students from other countries who are studying in the United States and planning to go back to their own country in a professional capacity. Acquainting them with the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States is an important aspect of the gaining of national leadership for the Young Women's Christian Association in the various countries of the world. Such help is particularly necessary in the Latin American countries and in the Orient, where the number of experienced, trained women leaders in either professional or volunteer capacity is exceedingly limited.

The programs of the Young Women's Christian Associations in other countries, as well as their inception in the meeting of simple human needs, have much in common with the work in the United States. Club work with girls, educational classes, recreation, residences—all are to be found in the different countries. It is particularly interesting to note that the program of health education and recreation has been an extremely popular one. In China a normal training school of physical education was developed, and there was emphasis on gymnasium work, outdoor games and health lectures in Japan and in the countries of South America.

In the report to the convention in 1924 an analysis was made of the membership of the Associations in other countries. The woman in the home, or the so-called woman of leisure, has often been the first group to be interested in the Association. In Argentina, Brazil, and in the Near

East many business and professional women, new groups in the economic life of those countries, were part of the Association and used it with more frequency than other groups. This was true also in the European Associations. In China, India and Japan the student Young Women's Christian Association was part of the whole Association movement. Beginning in the nineteen-twenties, an attempt was made to reach women going into industry, again a new social development, with some success in this work in both China and Japan.

The work with younger girls is common to every country; in many places it is an adaptation of the Girl Reserve movement generally used in the United States but with a symbolism and program adapted particularly to each country. That work with adolescents should be so widespread may mean little more than that girls in early adolescence are easy of access and are held by a colorful program of activity and recreation; or it may show an appreciation of the potential power of leadership in these girls who can in later years build and develop the Association movement.

As the years have gone on it has been evident that the attempt to relate the Association closely to the country in which it is established and to work largely through indigenous leadership has resulted in programs that differ very much from country to country, and in some places include work, such as health service for children, that in the United States is not generally considered to be part of the responsibility of the Young Women's Christian Association. This has been most true in those places where the Association is the only, or nearly the only, active women's organization.

"Health for women" has been the slogan of the Association in every country; and usually it has been a new but welcome one. In the Near East and Latin America, as well as in the Orient, physical development for women through gymnasium work was until lately unheard of. In Europe physical training was not always an innovation, but the health program that included recreation, folk-dancing and personal hygiene was distinctly a new feature and one that was especially needed in the period after the war.

Camps have been one of the most important contributions to health education. Every country in which American secretaries are working has at least one camp. In many cases they are a completely new experience, but camp life is entered into by the señoritas of South America and the girls of the Orient and Europe with the same enthusiasm that American girls show.

In China the Association conducts a many-sided program of health and physical education in a field practically untouched by other agencies.[4]

The Young Women's Christian Association in attempting to meet the religious needs of women and girls in other countries has been wisely flexible. The religious education program has as far as possible been adapted to the various types of experience. Bible study has been one of the most important methods, as it has in the United States. Vesper services, also, are frequently reported.

The most important factor in the developing Associations has, however, seemed to be the quality of the leadership. In the study made of the foreign work of both the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association under the direction of Dr. F. Ernest Johnson of the Federal Council of Churches, the following statement appears:

> What is here suggested is that, by and large, the chief distinctive contribution of the Christian Associations to the lives of young men and young women has been in the guidance offered by leaders who in themselves embody the "Association idea." This contribution is supplemented and reinforced by the adaptation of their program to natural interests, the constructive use of the group idea, and the development of activities sufficiently specific to give substance to training efforts. . . .
>
> The distinguishing mark of the Association secretary is his or her relationship to men and boys, women and girls, as in some sense an exemplar, an embodiment of Christian character. Where the Associations are at their best there is a tendency for men and boys, women and girls, to point to the secretary as all-in-all the kind of person they would like to be. Where this is not true there is an essential failure in Association purpose and achievement.[5]

From the published records and reports of the Foreign Division it appears that it has always been the objective of that department to help young Associations in other countries to become in as great a degree as possible self-supporting and self-governing. In other words, the objective is distinctly indigenous movements rather than an extension of the work of the United States into other countries. Such a plan has, however, gone slowly in many places. It has grown most rapidly in European countries. Following the war the United States withdrew support, either of secretaries or grants of money, from the young Associations in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, France, Russia, Belgium, Poland, Italy, and more gradually from the Baltic States. The support of the work in the Near East has continued over a longer period but has had to be lessened for lack of financial resources. In the Near

East and in the countries of South America and in certain other countries the Young Women's Christian Association has been called upon not only to develop a woman leadership capable of carrying the work of the Association, but also to help in establishing the status of women as professional workers in the field of social work and to increase their self-confidence and their skill in work done outside the protection of their own homes—at the same time persuading the community of the rightness and desirability of women's doing those things!

The national organization in this country has repeatedly reiterated that the aim of the foreign work promoted from the United States is to help women in other countries to establish their own organizations. The following paragraph from the report to the convention in 1926 states this clearly:

> The ultimate aim of the support which is given by Associations in the United States for work in other countries is to help the women of those countries to establish their own organizations and to secure staff and financial support within those countries. Progress toward this goal may be measured by increases in the amount of support and in the responsibility assumed by national leadership. Other factors, such as the scope and influence of the Association in the national life, enter in of course, but as a sending society the primary concern of the National Board and of the Associations in the United States is for the response in workers and funds in the countries to which the National Board is sending workers and money.[6]

The Foreign Division has been faced constantly with difficult problems of personnel, particularly that of choosing professional workers who were capable of taking the

best they had developed through experience in the United States and making it available to countries as different, for instance, as Chile and China, or India and Estonia. Added to the necessity for professional adaptation was the matter of personal adaptation. The secretaries have worked under varying types of government, with people of almost every religion, obliged to use in their daily life and work languages to which they were not accustomed, and faced with the need for fitting themselves quickly into a culture pattern that was alien to their experience. This situation is well summarized in the report to the 1928 convention:

> In Turkey, for example, the program must conform to recently enacted government regulations affecting all religious and philanthropic institutions. In the South American countries the religious belief of the majority of people is not the one out of which the Association in this country has developed. The thinking of the people in China today is conditioned by strongly nationalistic feelings and attitudes. The Association in India is made up of women both of the governing and the governed classes. Estonia and Latvia, with their three corresponding churches, present a variety of challenges to a Christian international organization. Unity of purpose in the midst of such diversity of backgrounds and methods is difficult of achievement and requires both statesmanship and grace in those who are sent as well as in those who receive them.[7]

It is impossible to write about the foreign work of the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States without referring to the World's Young Women's Christian Association. The fact that the national body in the United States is an organic part of the World's Young

Women's Christian Association has had great influence on the Association program at certain points, and, as the years have gone on, a greater influence on the total attitude of the organization. The Association in the United States functions as a member of the World's organization through developing the work in its own country as a conscious part of a world movement, so that it may be a strong and helpful member; through direct participation in the work of the World's Council by membership on it and by contributing financially to its support; and through contributing, under the guidance of the World's Council, to the Association movement in other countries.

The Young Women's Christian Association has for years felt the tension between the point of view that the work of the Foreign Division was that of a sending society comparable to foreign mission boards of the various churches of the United States, and the point of view that as a member of the World's Association—and thus helping and advising other national movements—the Association in the United States was carrying on, through the Foreign Division, a natural part of its work, that differed little in essence though greatly in its practical aspects from the help that a large well-set-up Association might give through its leadership to the organizing of Association work in an adjacent community, a process of cooperation through sharing which is constantly going on in the United States.

As has been pointed out elsewhere, the program of the Young Women's Christian Association in those countries to which the United States has furnished in some measure leadership and advisory service has been varied. The report of 1932 lists a variety of "international incidents"

which occurred in the two years between 1930 and 1932. They present such widely differing aspects as:

China

First national conference of industrial girls.

Chinese official authorities ask Y.W.C.A. to direct work in one of the huge refugee camps for flood sufferers. The China Association raises a flood fund of considerable proportions.

Communications to and from Association in Japan in regard to common peace aims.

India

First social workers' conference held, under auspices of Y.W.C.A.

Association representatives attend first All-Asian Woman's Conference in Lahore in 1931.

New hostel for students opened in Trivandrum, South India.

Japan

Development of industrial center in Nagoya.

Permanent camp-site given Tokyo Association by friends in Canada.

Four Japanese secretaries studying in the United States.

Philippine Islands

Dormitory for students opened.

Syria

Conference with other countries of the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Near East Relief transfers its employment bureau accompanied by a maintenance fund to Y.W.C.A.

Turkey

First Turkish delegates attend World's Y.W.C.A. training course in Rumania and conference in Palestine.

New organization plan adopted, looking to establishment of a Turkish organization under a Turkish board composed of both Christian and Moslems but predominantly Moslem,

and liaison committee to keep contact with Y.W.C.A. movement.

Estonia

National constitution registered with government.

First national convention.

South America

Bolivia organized.

Argentina

Cafeteria opened in Buenos Aires.

First training course for playground leaders.

Brazil

Case-work secretary of Rio de Janeiro studies in United States.

Association participates in International Women's Congress.

Chile

Hostel for university students opens in Santiago.

Association helps in recreation and clothing distribution in government refugee center.

Uruguay

Health education department trains leaders' group in two-year course.

Mexico

Week-end camp property near Mexico City acquired.

Mexican physical director assumes charge of gymnastics work after receiving training in United States and Denmark.[8]

In the *International Survey of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.* Dr. Johnson points out that the trend, in the United States, of the Association toward what can be called the social wing of American Christianity has affected the work in other countries as well. He says that it is of great importance for future relationships that this American idea should be understood abroad. It has been

a source of misunderstanding in certain places, perhaps less in the Orient than in other countries. Dr. Johnson states that it is looked upon by some Christian leaders, particularly in Europe, as a preoccupation with *things*. He is clear, however, that it is far more than that:

> It embodies a vigorous social faith, the outgrowth of a conviction that the redemption of society is a fundamental part of the church's task—that the social structure, no less than the individual life, is the object of Christian redemption; indeed, that the interrelations of the two demand it. The interest in the social gospel as manifested in many of our American churches and in our Christian Associations reflects a conviction that only through serious grappling with the social structure can the individual be effectively reached and regenerated.[5]

Dr. Johnson points out that the distinctive quality of the Young Women's Christian Association in other countries is that "of being responsible for the extension of this fellowship principle, which is the essence of the 'Association idea,' on an international and interreligious basis. This fact gives the foreign work its *raison d'être* as an object of American giving and validates its appeal to the constituency of the Associations."

In the development of an indigenous leadership the Association has found many problems. Dr. Johnson summarizes this in the following way:

> The recruiting and training of an indigenous secretariat are now hampered by several factors: (1) the fact that the movements do not make an effective appeal to a sufficient number of able young men and women; (2) the predominance of institutional responsibilities which tend to deaden the idealism of recruits and to require of them a type of

> service for which the youth of nations that have not progressed far in economic development have scant preparation; (3) the lack of security through adequate compensation and provision for retirement, which are universally looked for in most of these countries by young people contemplating a professional career.[5]

Dr. Johnson is of course speaking of both the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association. It is apparently true from the experience of the Young Women's Christian Association that (3), the lack of security, is an even greater problem in the Young Women's Christian Association than in the Young Men's Christian Association. In such countries as South America, for instance, it is by no means an accepted fact that women should work outside their own homes and find in social work a continuous opportunity for service which will provide them with a livelihood.

Over the years, the objective of the Young Women's Christian Association in carrying on its foreign work has been unchanged—that of developing in the various countries and under national leadership Young Women's Christian Associations which shall be the true expression of the women of those countries. Under the financial stress of the last few years the withdrawal of help in terms of program grants and particularly of staff seems to have been in several instances too rapid. The slow progress of women in attaining status as professional social workers has not been substantial enough to hold the work without the guidance of the American staff.

In the United States there has been in the past a lack of continuous interpretation to the local Associations of the basic elements in the program of the foreign work. The

educational material sent to Associations, the speeches made at conferences, tended to fall back on the picturesque, to resemble travel talks too much and to say too little of the conditions of women in the various countries and the contribution of the Young Women's Christian Association. In recent years, however, the total situation in other lands as it affects women has been to the fore, and the place of the Association as a woman movement, Christian in program and with a strong international emphasis, is constantly stressed not only in the United States but in all other countries where the Association idea has taken root.

Until recently, also, relatively little advantage was taken of the opportunity for tying up the work in foreign countries with the program for peace and international understanding promoted in the Association in the United States. There is now a growing realization that in its foreign work the Association of the United States has a laboratory experiment and a program in international education the possibilities of which are still young.

From various reports, speeches and correspondence it is evident that, particularly in the Orient, a rising question is the character of the Young Women's Christian Association as a Christian organization and the possibility of its becoming an interreligious rather than a Christian movement. At the same time there is increasing emphasis in the World's organization and in many of the national movements, on the essentially Christian character of the Association and its contribution to Christian thought and action. These are major questions of polity involving the roots of the organization. These questions of what is happening to women the world over and of the future of an indigenous movement, Christian in inception, in the countries of the East where other religions are well rooted,

will in their solving determine the future of the foreign work of the Association.

With the great reduction in financial resources of the early nineteen-thirties it became necessary for the Foreign Division to discover new and untried ways of promoting the world viewpoint and service of the Young Women's Christian Association. In an article in the *Womans Press* the executive of the Foreign Division has stated the trends of new policy as follows:

> The keynote is cooperation within the framework of the World's Association, using the World's Council as an international planning center and clearing house. The older days of "sending" and "receiving" are outmoded. Concentration on certain clearly defined projects in a few countries in order to maintain the highest possible standard is the intensive program, matched by an extensive program of lesser units of aid all over the world through wide contacts, conferences and pieces of training.
>
> The methods used are to be more varied and flexible than heretofore. A smaller number of full-time secretaries will be augmented by a larger number of short-time workers and volunteers. Funds will be applied to many types of enterprises of a non-recurring nature in many different countries instead of being sent as monthly grants to carry the overhead of a very few Association movements. Resources previously overlooked, such as Association officers on world journeys and leaders from other countries in American universities, will be discovered and utilized.[9]

This new turn to the world enterprise is as truly pioneering as anything done in those early days when the Young Women's Christian Association dared to send "young unmarried women" to the foreign field and to

entrust to them the task of building an indigenous woman movement, Christian and international.

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[1] *Report of the First Biennial Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (New York, 1906), p. 17.

[2] *Report of the Second Biennial Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (St. Paul, 1909), pp. 49-51.

[3] Minutes of the Foreign Department, 1917.

[4] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Eighth National Convention* (1924), p. 208.

[5] International Survey Committee. *International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations* (New York, 1932), pp. 338, 343-344, 405, 407.

[6] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Ninth National Convention* (1926), p. 18.

[7] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Tenth National Convention* (1928), p. 61.

[8] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Twelfth National Convention* (1932), pp. 92-95.

[9] Lyon, Sarah S. "The World Moves On," Womans Press, XXIX (January, 1935), pp. 13-14.

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CHAPTER VII

Pioneering

In the growing complexity of life today the methods whereby an institution subdivides and gives birth to other institutions are of social significance. In following such development in the Young Women's Christian Association the processes that appear are, the recognition of a new need or new opportunity in the lives of women and girls, a study of that need, and the formulation of plans for experimentation in meeting the need. After a longer or shorter period, if the experimentation is successful, the techniques are developed, the field of work defined, and the objective and the specific purpose clearly recognized. At this point the possibility of the new institution's standing on its own feet in terms of financial support and trained leadership is scrutinized and, if the time seems auspicious, the new movement is launched. So elaborate a process cannot be discovered in the early days, when action followed inspiration with little provision for study, but in the end the results were substantially the same. The fact that the Young Women's Christian Association has consciously seen program at any point in time and space as the expression of the interests and needs of its membership rather than as a continuing pattern, has made it relatively easy organizationally, for such an institutional nebular hypothesis to create new institutions.

The number and importance of the independent move-

ments and organizations which owe their beginnings or a large part of their initial impetus to the Young Women's Christian Association is worthy of record. The Association has, it seems from this evidence, conceived its program task to be often one of pioneering, and has been satisfied when the point is reached where a plan, a program or an idea has so proved its worth that it can be taken over by another organization or can launch forth on its own.

Many of the early local Young Women's Christian Associations started work which later became independent philanthropies or charities in their cities. For example, Women's Exchanges for the sale of women's handiwork were started in St. Louis, Cincinnati and other places, and put on a paying basis. The Board of Associated Charities of Cincinnati, and other relief agencies elsewhere, had their origin in Young Women's Christian Association work. The Cleveland Association carried on work with children for eleven years, until in 1893 the Day Nursery and Kindergarten Society of Cleveland became a chartered institution.

Records are incomplete, and consequently the statements which follow cover only a partial list of organizations, movements and enterprises which were in their beginnings actively promoted or shared in by the Young Women's Christian Association. In some cases this work meant lending staff as well as sitting in counsel; in others the Association has been a less obvious but real force in the difficult task of giving structure and form to ideas and theories. Such cooperation as this represents falls within the area of interest of the Young Women's Christian Association because of the Association's concern for the whole girl or woman and for her development. In making this theoretical approach of unity of conception, specialized tasks

emerge which can be more effectively carried into sustained action by a group other than the one which has to do with the whole. It would seem that in following such a theory to its logical conclusions the welfare and needs of girls and women rather than the fortunes of an institution have been uppermost in the minds of the leaders.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TRAVELERS AID SOCIETIES

The report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations to the Eighth National Convention, in 1924, gives the history of Association cooperation with the Travelers' Aid Society up to that time. The paragraphs quoted in this statement are from that report.

> Nearly forty years ago the Boston Y.W.C.A. established cooperative service with England in the first travelers' aid work in America. As a natural sequence other cities added a worker for travelers' aid to their Y.W.C.A. staffs in order to meet and protect traveling girls and women. . . . As yet, New York City, through its Women's Bible Society or the Young Women's Christian Association, met trains or steamers only on request, in particular cases.[1]

In 1903 the New York City Travelers' Aid Society was formed, non-sectarian and non-commercial, and soon, under the guidance of the same Grace Dodge who was later the president of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations, became the most important society bearing the name. Travelers' aid societies operating as a part of the Young Women's Christian Association predominated in the country at large.

> This was due to the fact that no other organizations in such towns and cities were either equipped or interested to help the girls of America as were the local Young Women's Christian Associations, bound together by their national affiliation.[1]

All organizations, including the Young Women's Christion Association, which were doing travelers' aid work recognized the need of national travelers' aid unity as inherent in the nature of the service. Therefore, in 1914 the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations joined in a movement to promote national cooperation, which in 1917 resulted in the formation of the National Board of Travelers Aid Societies (now the National Association of Travelers Aid Societies). The National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association was represented on this travelers' aid board by Mrs. Robert E. Speer, Mrs. Robert L. Dickinson and Dr. Anna L. Brown.

> It was evident that in the best interests of this service there should be affiliation of all societies doing travelers' aid work, as its peculiar need is complete harmony of cooperation, standardization of method and fluid procedure. Both national bodies recognize the difficulty of any local society's belonging and owing responsibility to two national organizations. Therefore, with the same attitude that has characterized the national Young Women's Christian Association in several similar periods of its history, it was ready to see travelers' aid pass out of the sole administration of any local Y.W.C.A. into that of a cooperating community committee of which the Y.W.C.A. could be one factor, but which should be affiliated and directed by the National Travelers' Aid.[1]

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH

This organization was a direct outgrowth of the work done by the War Work Council of the Young Women's Christian Association through its Commission on Social Morality and its program of health education. During the war period the educational work of this Commission on Social Morality was aimed at making social practices correspond to the highest code of ethics of individuals and to the ideal of positive health as the norm for each person. Interest in health grew with appreciation of the fact that health was an attainable as well as a desirable aim. A change in attitude became evident, in that women were no longer willing to accept physical weakness as inevitable.[2]

To such a program of health education it was evident that medical women had a special contribution.

On the invitation and at the expense of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations, an international conference of women physicians was held in New York City for a period of six weeks in the fall of 1919. Thirty official delegates were sent from fifteen nations. During the closing days of this notable conference, the first international gathering of medical women, the results were condensed and reported to a convention of thirteen national women's organizations. . . .

From this convention there emerged the Women's Foundation for Health, a cooperative body of fourteen leading national women's organizations, "formed with the purpose of correlating the health activities of the various organizations in a program emphasizing the positive phase of health."

The National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations sponsored this movement, making possible the

services of the necessary technicians, and facilities for promoting the program. A series of publications on various aspects of health were issued jointly by the Bureau of Social Education of the Young Women's Christian Association, the Women's Foundation for Health, and the American Medical Association.

In July 1922 the foundation became an independent organization with headquarters in New York City.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUBS

The Young Women's Christian Association has always included in its membership individual business and professional women and special clubs made up of younger business girls. Nevertheless no real effort was made to organize that group on a national scale until 1919. At that time a secretary was called to the National Board staff to take up this responsibility for the national organization. After much thought and a frank facing of facts, it was decided that the interests of the entire group might best be served by promoting, along with the development of the Association program for business and professional women's clubs, the formation of an independent federation of business and professional women throughout the country. The Young Women's Christian Association recognized that its chief function lay in the development of a program with the younger business girls, and that older women from business and the professions found their place naturally on the boards and committees of local Associations.[3]

At a meeting called and financed by the War Work Council of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations, a National Federation of Business

and Professional Women's Clubs was organized in St. Louis, July 14-18, 1919. The War Work Council financed the new organization by a grant of an additional $15,000, thus making it possible for the new organization, from the beginning, to employ trained leadership.[4]

RELATIONS OF THE SUMMER SCHOOLS OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS WITH THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The relationship of the Young Women's Christian Association with the summer schools of industrial workers has followed a somewhat different line. Here, instead of starting under the Young Women's Christian Association, the new agency has from the beginning been a separate organization, with the Young Women's Christian Association helping at many points and using its varied resources, both national and local, in particular those of its industrial department, to further the new enterprise. Included in this cooperation has been the continued help given by several individuals to the difficult task of raising funds. The industrial department of the National Board helped to recruit the first group of students and the industrial staff have continued to give active service to the schools in reaching applicants each year.

As the summer school organization developed, the original district committees were sub-divided so that there was one in each of the principal industrial cities of the United States. These committees have often been fostered by the industrial department of the local Young Women's Christian Association, especially in those places where no other interest was at first apparent. After committees have been organized the industrial secretary or some member of the industrial department has always served on the summer

school committee, often taking the brunt of the work with the students. The Young Women's Christian Association has offered facilities for meetings to summer school committees and has endeavored to make all summer school students feel at home in its building. In some cases, work with the summer school students has been considered part of the job of the industrial secretary and included in her regular schedule.

In following up former students, arranging classes for them and bringing them into contact with various community organizations, the help of the local industrial departments has been continuous. Conferences of the industrial department have often aroused the first interest of summer school applicants in industrial questions and have given them some idea of the work of the summer schools.

"Not only with the actual summer school work but in the more difficult task of interpreting industrial problems to the public, the industrial departments of the Young Women's Christian Association have led the way. From the point of view of the summer school organization this piece of educational work is most valuable and is proving far-reaching in its effects." [5]

THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SERVICE

In 1911 the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations established in New York City the first International Institute, a branch of the Association devoted entirely to the protection and general welfare of immigrant girls and women. Other branches soon followed the organization of this one.

In 1914, at the World's Young Women's Christian Association conference in Stockholm, Sweden, the delegation from the United States, in consequence of the dis-

covery of the need by the International Institutes, made proposals that an international plan for the protection of migrating girls be set up between the various countries. The war intervened and delayed the development of such a plan. But in June 1920, at the next World's conference of the Young Women's Christian Association, in Switzerland, the following resolution was passed:

> The International Commission wishes to record its conviction that the movement of large groups of people from one country to another, forming highways of intercommunication, might be made a means of building up a better understanding between national groups, and that for this reason, as well as because of the necessity of meeting the immediate human needs involved, an organization which is Christian and international must be deeply concerned with this question in all its bearings.
>
> At the same time it is our opinion that emigration for young girls alone, in view of the upheaval which is necessarily involved, is as a general rule harmful, and that therefore the Association should discourage the emigration of girls without their families. We are agreed, however, that it is the duty of the Association to regard emigration as offering a definite opportunity for Christian service, and therefore to see that all emigrants are given help and as much practical instruction as possible for the changed conditions to which they are going.[6]

By January 1921 a secretary of migration had been appointed, followed immediately by the establishment of a research and information bureau. Special migration secretaries were appointed in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France and the United States, and definite plans for work also in Poland and Constantinople were under way.

An international study was made of the welfare of migrants. This report, completed in June 1921, made recommendations of far-reaching influence in regard to health and hygiene, protection in transit, coordination of government regulations, deportations, repatriation, illiteracy and other acute problems of the situation of migrants. Recommendations based on this study were lodged with the International Labor Bureau and the Social Welfare Section of the League of Nations, with the International Red Cross, with the Young Men's Christian Association, and with the World's Young Women's Christian Association. These recommendations have served as the foundation not only for constructive social service program but for fundamental changes in the care and handling of human beings as they move from one country to another.

The international protective service of the national bodies of Young Women's Christian Associations was well under way when the World's Young Women's Christian Association declared in 1923 that the needs of this international service were so great that they warranted its being set up as an independent agency devoted entirely to that program. As an independent body it was hoped that the work could grow far beyond anything which could be achieved if it remained as one sector of an extensive organization committed to many other interests.

At the Eighth National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations, in 1924, the following resolution was adopted:

> That we encourage and aid the World's Committee in the forming of a separate organization for carrying on international migration service, separated from but cooperat-

ing with the World's Young Women's Christian Association.[7]

By October 1, 1924, a new organization, to be known as the International Migration Service, had been effected as a result of the cooperative action of the World's Committee and of the national Associations of Young Women's Christian Associations in seven different countries.

In the "Report of the National Board to the Ninth National Convention" in 1926, the following statement appears:

> The resolution of the convention in respect to this work was that we encourage and aid the World's Committee in the forming of a separate organization for carrying on the migration service. . . . Help was given by the National Board to the securing of money for the budget for this organization, and that part of the program of the Department of Immigration and Foreign Communities which was given over to this service was separated from the National Board and became a branch of the International Migration Service, with its headquarters in New York City.[8]

In 1932 this International Migration Service, with international headquarters in Geneva, with well-established bureaus in seven countries and with correspondents in three times as many more, celebrated its seventh year of successful independent service.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF IMMIGRANT WELFARE

After study of the changing needs among the foreign-born, the National Board in 1933 launched a new national society called "The National Institute of Immigrant Wel-

fare." To this new organization the National Board turned over the Bureau of Immigration and the Foreign-Born, which it had maintained in different forms for over twenty years. This transfer involved expenditure both of time and money during the months of planning and promotion. The action of the National Board was as follows:

At the meeting of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America, held Wednesday, June 7, 1933, the following actions were taken regarding work for foreign-born people:

1. In recognition of the changing conditions among foreign-born people; of the increasing need of specialized work in their behalf; and of the possibilities at this time for a constructive approach to the future in migration work and work within the foreign communities;

   And while emphasizing its policy of including women and girls of all nationalities in the membership and fellowship of the Association and planning to continue to engage in programs and plans for work with women and girls of foreign communities, be it

Voted: 1. That the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations in principle approve the organization of a distinctive national agency to meet the needs of foreign-born people in a more extensive way than has been possible heretofore.

2. That the National Board appoint a committee of two or more members of the National Board, the general secretary of the Association, and the executive secretary of the Bureau of Immigration and the Foreign-Born to take such steps as may be necessary and possible for the development of such an agency.

3. That the National Board is convinced that the best interests of foreign-born people and the country would be served if a closer integration of all specialized programs in this field might be achieved.

The report to the Thirteenth National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations, held in Philadelphia in 1934, makes the following statements:

> On December 13, 1933, the inaugural meeting of the new agency proposed was held and a committee of twenty-six was constituted. From this beginning there has emerged "The National Institute of Immigrant Welfare" with a national Board of Directors of fifty to one hundred, geographically distributed. . . .
>
> The National Board will transfer a great part of its specialized activities in immigration and in the foreign communities to the National Institute of Immigrant Welfare. Thus the experience of over twenty years, and the proved principles of this work will be resolved into a new force to carry on for understanding of foreign folk, for sympathy with the stranger adrift in a strange land, and for service to people from all earth's lands, which the Young Women's Christian Associations have so well begun.[9]

This willingness of the Young Women's Christian Association to turn over work it had begun and in some cases carried on over a considerable period, was due not only to the considered decision that the type of work involved, such as travelers' aid work, was not inherently germane to the general policy of the organization, and to the knowledge that it was not financially possible under the Young Women's Christian Association to maintain or expand the work to meet the needs and opportunities that their early successful ventures had disclosed, but also to the fact that

the Young Women's Christian Association had early accepted for itself responsibility for starting enterprises too pioneering in character to arouse general interest and support.

In other words, an important factor in the development of this and of other new organizations has been the protection and the nurture given by the Young Women's Christian Association at a time when the energies of the pioneer leaders were needed to promote the idea and the concept rather than to provide the framework of the institution. In this respect the Young Women's Christian Association has to a certain extent played the rôle of a foundation, coming into the field much earlier and providing experience, guidance and enthusiasm in addition to financial support.

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[1] Report on Cooperation with the National Association of Travelers Aid Societies, *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Eighth National Convention* (1924), pp. 229-231.

[2] Gates, Edith M. *Health Through Leisure-Time Recreation* (New York: The Womans Press, 1931), pp. 187, 188, 190.

[3] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Sixth National Convention* (1920), p. 16.

[4] Report of the Action of the Executive Committee of the War Work Council, February 25, 1919.

[5] Unpublished manuscript of Hilda W. Smith, Director of Affiliated Summer Schools for Women Workers in Industry.

[6] Findings of the Three Sections of the International Com-

mission, World's Young Women's Christian Association (Champéry, Switzerland, 1920), p. 7.

[7] *Report of the Eighth National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (New York City, 1924), p. 158.

[8] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Ninth National Convention* (1926), p. 60.

[9] Dickinson, Mrs. Robert L., and Bremer, Mrs. Harry M. "Report of the Bureau of Immigration and the Foreign-Born," Womans Press, XXVIII (April, 1934), pp. 189-190.

CHAPTER VIII

Strains and Stresses

COLLECTIVE behavior, in the sense that the individuals making up the group are motivated by a common impulse and act as a group in furthering their common purpose, is characteristic of social movements. Instances of collective behavior are numerous in the history of the Young Women's Christian Association—behavior motivated by a desire for social reform which follows the Christian pattern of individual and social life. Park and Burgess in their *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* say:

> Social unrest is first communicated, then takes form in crowd and mass movements, and finally crystallizes in institutions. . . . There is at first a vague general discontent and distress. Then a violent, confused and disorderly but enthusiastic and popular movement arises. Finally the movement takes form; develops leadership organization; formulates doctrines and dogmas—eventually it is accepted, established, legalized. The movement dies, but the institution remains.[1]

In a restricted fashion this general development is apparent in the growth of the Young Women's Christian Association. The effects of the common impulse, however, seem to be recurrent as the occasion arises, growing out of the conflict in interests of the varied groups making up

the membership of the organization. As a consequence, the movement aspects as characterized by collective behavior have never ceased, but manifest themselves at these periods of conflict, while the institution, in the sense of the framework of the organization, stabilizes and through its methods of group work maintains the varied membership which makes recurrent conflicts of interest inevitable.

It is possible that if the recurrent character of the collective behavior of the movement could be identified and the conflict pattern traced through its cycle, it would throw light on the difficult question of maintaining within settled institutions vitality and the ability to change.

There is in the Young Women's Christian Association little standardization of program. The unifying elements have been and are the purpose of the organization and the continuous interchange of plans, ideas, programs and policies brought about through the work of the national body, its publications, and such gatherings as the national conventions, summer conferences and training courses. Because the particular way in which these general policies shall express themselves in local communities is determined by the vision and capacity of the leadership, the local program is peculiarly susceptible to what is going on in any particular community and the needs and desires of women there.

To a large extent the same thing is true of national and world programs. In the *International Messenger* of February 1900, the following statement is made by the president of the Louisville, Kentucky, Association:

> The crowning glory of the Women's Christian Association is that it lives "down among the people"; and while its

> women, as a body, will not have the responsibility of the ballot, they do not hesitate to go to the fountain-head and mold politics as best they can and where it should be primarily influenced, in the lives and hearts of the mothers and wives of the voters; doing so by way of the Association's comfort and relief committees, by its mothers' meetings, and along many other avenues by us alone best and most quietly and gently reached.[2]

This point of view, expressed in the terminology of a time when women did not have political suffrage—that the Association is responsible for and interested in all matters affecting women and girls, as much in their causes and origins as in remedial programs to lessen the effects of unfortunate conditions—is repeatedly stressed through the years of Association history.

Interest in the temperance question appeared early. This was the first question that could be called one of public affairs to become evident. In *Faith and Works* of September 1875 it says: "The Temperance Question is at present receiving something like the attention which its vital importance merits. A new phase of effort has been put forth in the past two years by the women of the land." [3] Then follows a discussion of the organization of the Women's National Christian Temperance Union and an earnest recommendation that Association women take their part in this movement. From then on there was scarcely a number of this magazine that did not at some point recognize the temperance question.

Early also in the history of the organization is found keen interest in the question of industrial conditions under which women were working. The following statement in a paper presented at the eleventh national conference, in

1891, is related to the question of wages and homes for working girls:

> We have been accustomed to think the question of wages quite beyond our province. Are we justified in shirking responsibility here? I believe not. I believe that the Women's Christian Associations of the land have power to materially influence the rate of women's wages and that in neglecting to use that power they are making a serious blunder. It is not necessary to organize trades-unions and lead labor processions. There are simpler methods by which one may endeavor to raise the industrial status of women. We may investigate complaints, we may make public and private protest against injustice, we may give encouragement and aid to women who are seeking better pay.
>
> Why should not a Christian association definitely undertake such work? May the day soon come when Christian women shall unite "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke." Some of the Associations here represented will feel that they are not yet ready for active championship of the industrial rights of women, but all will agree that our influence must not be on the wrong side. It may be that we are unconsciously contributing to the forces that tend to depress the wages of women.[4]

One of the serious problems met at points like this is the strain that comes at times on a single local Association. The actions of the convention are binding on the national organization but not on its autonomous local units. Nevertheless, the whole Association movement is bound so closely together that if a local Association, particularly one that is alive to the needs and interests of women, incurs the criticism of groups of individuals in the community through following out recommendations made at

the national convention, it becomes in the eyes of the public liable not only for its own acts but also for the policies and practices of similar nature of the national Association. It is considerations of this kind that impel the National Board to refer to the national convention questions of detail in regard to its public affairs program and to ask repeatedly for endorsement of policies. Experience has shown that the Young Women's Christian Association is a movement which cannot be easily broken into its component parts, and that each local Association bears in time of crisis the burden of the whole, even as the good name of the national organization is in the eyes of the public determined by the character of any particular local Association on which attention is focused. There is perhaps no stronger evidence than this of the essential "movement" character of the Association.

Of no less significance for the Young Women's Christian Association was the action taken by the Cleveland convention in endorsing the "Social Ideals of the Churches," a statement in regard to industrial principles, drawn up and endorsed by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The national conference of industrial girls, which met in Washington in the autumn of 1919, had passed a series of resolutions urging that the Young Women's Christian Association "consider and present to its National Board a set of standards for women in industry, such as an eight-hour law, prohibition of night work, the right of labor to organize." [5] This request was accompanied by the suggestion that the Association take steps to work for the "passage of such laws as will make possible the carrying out of these standards." [5]

A study of the issues involved was begun, both through the national organization and through the local Associa-

tions. As a result of this work the Committee on the National Board's Report to the national convention in Cleveland in the spring of 1920 recommended to the convention the adoption of the Social Ideals of the Churches. It was the general feeling of the National Board that it preferred to follow the lead of the churches in this matter rather than to develop an independent statement covering much the same field. This convention was also deeply concerned with the religious basis itself (see Chapter V), giving it equal consideration with the Social Ideals, the two subjects interacting on each other.

This action came nine years after the Indianapolis convention, where resolutions directed to the same end had been adopted. Much had happened, however, in those nine years. The whole country was now conscious of the economic power of women and their importance in the field of industry. Moreover, women had received full political suffrage, so that their influence on legislation could be exercised directly as well as indirectly. Finally, the new unity of the national organization was so strong that the delegates present at the convention, though they were well aware of the fact that the resolutions passed there were binding on the national body but not on the local Associations which they represented, nevertheless felt a personal commitment and a loyalty to the whole which had not been present in the earlier days.

The Social Ideals of the Churches included specific recommendations in regard to social legislation and the principles of industrial justice. The principles involved in the statements in regard to the right of workers to organize and the desirability of collective bargaining were at the time of the adoption of the Social Ideals, and have been later, the center of the greatest discussion and of the most

serious problems that the Association has faced in endeavoring to uphold its action. To many women present at that convention some of the ideas expressed in this social creed were at least strange, if not distasteful, and only recognition of the fact that the large group of industrial women and girls in the Association membership considered such action essential if the Association purpose was to have any meaning for them, brought their endorsement. It was a fellowship experience, in that the whole Association shared with and took on responsibility for the particular problems of one group.

Shortly after this adoption of the Social Ideals a legislative service was instituted by the National Board, to furnish information to local Associations on proposals in state legislatures and in Congress. This has since become the National Committee on Public Affairs. State members of the committee follow state legislation and work with local Associations in their respective states, to the end that the Associations may have essential information and that their efforts may be effective.

Another early interest of the Young Women's Christian Association in the field of public questions was peace. The following resolution in favor of arbitration was presented to and accepted by the International Conference of Women's Christian Associations in 1889:

> Resolved, That we, the delegates of the Young Women's Christian Associations, do hereby declare ourselves in favor of arbitration as a substitute for war at all times, and express it as our conviction that every Christian woman should use her influence against the war spirit, and against anything that encourages it, especially among the young.
>
> It was moved, seconded and passed to adopt this resolu-

tion, and further ordered that the report be embodied in the Journal.[6]

After the forming of the present national organization of the Young Women's Christian Association in 1906, an increasing interest was shown in the whole question of international relations and of world situations. This interest has expressed itself through three main currents of effort which are closely related and play into each other: membership in the World's Association, by which the Associations in this country are connected with the Associations of other countries; contributions of professional staff and funds to Associations in less developed countries; education and citizenship work in behalf of international relations and world peace. In 1915 the first convention action of the Young Women's Christian Association concerning world peace appears in the records. The national convention of that year, the last one to meet until 1920, expressed its desire for "peace when it can be had with righteousness," [7] and wired President Wilson its hope that this country might "take an active part in bringing about a world-wide cessation of war." Less than two years afterward the United States entered the World War.

After the World War the interest in peace and in international relations was continued, as is evidenced by convention actions from 1922 to 1930. Probably the most significant statement on internationalism ever recorded officially by the World's Young Women's Christian Association was that made at its 1922 meeting at St. Wolfgang, Austria. The statement, which is an addition to the "Aim" of the World's Association, is as follows:

It [the World's Young Women's Christian Association] also calls all national Associations to promote Christian prin-

ciples of social and international conduct by encouraging the development of a right public conscience such as shall strengthen all those forces which are working for the promotion of peace and better understanding between classes, nations and races; believing that the world social order can only be made Christian through individuals devoted to the single purpose of doing God's will, and that through obedience to the law of Christ there shall follow the extension of his kingdom in which the principles of justice, love and the equal value of every human life shall apply to national and international as well as to personal relations.[8]

Previous to this World's Young Women's Christian Association meeting, the commission which prepared this statement had sent it to the various national organizations for their comment and approval. This statement came to the Seventh National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations in 1922, and was endorsed by the convention in the following resolution:

That the principles enumerated in the statement regarding the relationships between classes, nations and races, issued by the World's Executive Committee, be endorsed by this convention; and that the National Board be authorized to instruct the delegates to the World's Committee meeting to vote in favor of the incorporation of such principles in the constitution of the World's Young Women's Christian Association.[8]

Since that time the World's Executive Committee, as well as the National Board, has repeatedly referred to this statement as authority for various concrete actions taken in regard to international affairs.

The 1922 convention also voted in favor of the outlawry of war, and in that same year the National Board

joined the Women's Joint Congressional Committee in order to work in Washington in behalf of measures which many of the women's organizations had agreed to promote. In 1924 the New York convention voted approval of the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations. It was in that year that the World's Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association held its meeting in Washington, just following the national convention in New York. In 1926 the National Board joined the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, and from that time has cooperated actively in its annual conferences. In 1928 the national convention endorsed the efforts of the government "to further the negotiations of a multilateral treaty of the Great Powers for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy." Probably no one factor has so strengthened the international relations program of the Young Women's Christian Association as has this active and continuous connection with other women's organizations.

The effectiveness of these policies of the national Association rises and falls according to the manner in which they are carried out by the local Associations, but work in behalf of international relations is recorded in steadily rising crescendo in the reports of the National Board to the conventions, which trace programs on the field.

This interest in international affairs, and in particular the organization of the world for peace, drew its emphasis from many-sided Association activities. The Young Women's Christian Association has an historic responsibility for the spread of the Association movement to other lands. Added to this is the work in the United States with the foreign-born, which includes an understanding

of their foreign backgrounds and appreciation of the cultural heritage which they bring to America, together with the ever enlarging part played by the American Association in the World's Young Women's Christian Association. To these natural channels of interest might be added the historic missionary compulsion of the Protestant church; the constant coming and going of Association representatives, including many Americans, between the various national movements; and the inherent concern, always characteristic of the Association, for the environment in which the individual lives, which today means the world.

It is not to be wondered at that international interest is strong. It is stronger as well as more flexible than would be the case if this interest were centered on only one aspect of world affairs. Through its growing understanding of the processes by which changes are brought about, the leadership of the Young Women's Christian Association seems to appreciate the fact that the strain, or tension, of working on these great problems of which the Association is a part is not a calamity, in spite of difficulties involved, but rather an essential step in the slow evolution of human society.

In addition to its concern with industrial and international questions the Young Women's Christian Association has also carried a continuing interest in interracial questions. As early as 1893 a Young Women's Christian Association for colored women was organized in Dayton, Ohio. As far as the records show, this body was on friendly relations with the Young Women's Christian Association of Dayton but was not organically a part of it. Similar work with Negroes grew up in New York, Brooklyn and other cities. At some period not clear from the records

but not later than 1906, when the present national body was formed, the policy was adopted of opening, where the numbers of Negroes warranted it, a branch Association in the Negro community rather than a separate organization. The conceptions back of this policy were varied. The ideals of inclusiveness and of participation seemed to play a part. The desire that the Young Women's Christian Association should be for all women and girls, regardless of race or creed, was, however, combined with a realistic appreciation of the difficulties involved in such common participation in activities. There was also the practical question of financial support, which must come from the white community whether it was for the central Association or for the branch for Negro women and girls.

The opportunity for developing Negro leadership through responsibility in Association work was also recognized, and gradually the control of the branches in the Negro communities came almost entirely into the hands of Negro women, both as lay committees of management and as employed staff. In the northern part of the country Negro women representing the Negro branch sit on the general boards of directors and take their part in the development of the Association in the whole community. In like manner the Negro staff are a part of the whole and share in the general staff and Association activities. The extent to which this participation is easy and far-reaching differs from place to place and is largely determined by the community attitudes toward Negroes and the proportion of Negro to white population.

The question has been raised, both by Negroes and by white leaders who are particularly concerned with relationships between the races, as to whether the plan of developing branches for Negro women and girls in Negro

communities is a policy of segregation. This has, as far as records show, never been a clear issue in the Association. The policy of developing branches in different communities is a general one, and the opportunity for developing Negro leadership has seemed to depend largely on this type of organization. There is evidence that in some places Negro women and girls not living in the Negro community but coming to the central Association are referred to the Negro branch if they wish to enter activities. In other places there is a sprinkling of Negro women and girls in the general activities of the Association regardless of whether there is or is not a branch in the Negro community. Certainly there is increasing participation by Negro women and girls in the Association as a whole. This can be seen in the movements of industrial girls, of business girls, and in the national convention itself. The whole matter of interracial questions and interracial relations appears to have been worked out on the trial and error method, with little or no official policy or action.

A chapter on the strains and stresses of the Young Women's Christian Association can hardly be closed without some reference to the question of religion. From the earliest days, differences of opinion in regard to the policies and practices of the Association as a religious organization have been in evidence. The issue of whether a rigid theological statement or a more general expression of intent should be accepted as a basis of membership was back of the forming of two separate national organizations and of their remaining separate until 1906. From 1913 until the present day there has been no national convention that did not raise in some form the question of the way in which the Christian basis of the organization should be

stated. As in many other instances, the Association has seemed to tend toward a middle course, and thus to lose from its leadership both the most conservative religiously and those who have little interest in an expressed Christian purpose. From its critics apparently the Association has always been between two cross-fires—from those who consider that the organization is far too religious and that it attempts to take the place of the church or even tends to become a denomination in itself, and from those who consider it to be living under false pretenses when it retains the word Christian in the name, in view of the emphasis in its program on so-called secular activities and the lack of any direct preaching and teaching of the Christian faith. It is important to note that there has never been any distinction of creed in the non-voting membership.

The sum total of hearsay evidence seems to show that the Young Women's Christian Association in the United States is in general considered to be a religious organization largely influenced by liberal Protestantism, if not controlled by it, and bearing a close relation to the Protestant church. This conception is at variance with the avowed intent of the organization, as expressed both by national and international bodies, to be ecumenical in philosophy and to welcome not only as participants in program but as leaders in the movement representatives of all Christian communions.

Plainly the Young Women's Christian Association has not hesitated to take part in controversial questions and to throw its influence on what it conceived to be the side of right from a Christian viewpoint when those questions patently involved the welfare of women and girls and in particular women and girls actively represented in its membership.

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[1] Park and Burgess. *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 874.

[2] Report of the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the Women's and Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada (Memphis, 1899), *International Messenger*, VI (February, 1900), p. 144.

[3] Editorial notice. *Faith and Works*, I (September, 1875), p. 6.

[4] Coman, Jean. "Working Girls' Homes—Should They Be Made Self-Supporting?" *Journal of the Eleventh Biennial Conference of the International Board of Women's Christian Associations* (Chicago, 1891), pp. 59-62.

[5] Unpublished records of the National Board.

[6] *Journal of the Tenth Biennial Meeting of the International Conference of Women's Christian Associations* (Baltimore, 1889), p. 25.

[7] *Report of the Fifth National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (Los Angeles, 1915), pp. 95-96.

[8] *Report of the Seventh National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (Hot Springs, 1922), pp. 133-134.

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CHAPTER IX

The Young Women's Christian Association in Times of Crisis

THE widespread organization of the Young Women's Christian Association and its varied program for women and girls have given it both opportunity and responsibility in times of crisis, regardless of whether the crisis was economic or that of war. It is interesting to notice that the first women who made use of the first Young Women's Christian Association residence included "nine nurses from the Crimean War, three matrons of immigrant ships, and two foreigners." This was in London in 1855. The original source of the quotation has been lost, but both tradition and history show that the return of the nurses from the Crimean War was a main factor in the organization of the program of the first Young Women's Christian Association in London.

On March 18, 1920, the Honorable Newton D. Baker, then Secretary of War, wrote as follows to the chairman of the War Work Council of the Young Women's Christian Association:

> For the things which you have accomplished as broad-minded, far-visioned women, I am grateful. War, as far as our armed forces are concerned, is a part of the past. As citizens of this country, however, we have an important duty to perform in the readjustment of our economic and social conditions, and in the establishment of our minds to meet the

> new situation in which our country now finds itself. I am confident that the same self-sacrificing interest and devotion, which did so much to bring the war to a successful conclusion, will lead you to undertake this larger and more definite problem.[1]

Like all other agencies, social and religious, the work of the Young Women's Christian Association was deeply affected by the World War. It was not, however, until April 1917, when the United States entered the war, that a serious attempt was made in this country to organize the resources of the organization for national service. Almost immediately upon the declaration of war, inquiries as to how best to serve women and girls in this time of emergency began to pour into headquarters. In the summer of 1916, because of the concentration of troops on the Mexican border, the national Association had begun special work with girls at San Antonio and El Paso, Texas, and Douglas, Arizona, in cooperation with the local Associations. This experience stood the organization in good stead. Moreover, as a result of years of hard work, the Young Women's Christian Association was an established organization nationally as well as locally, with work in every state and a wide knowledge of the needs and desires of women and girls. Representatives of the national Young Women's Christian Association were in the first groups called to Washington to face with the government the tremendous demands of those critical days. It was no small thing to be able to say that the 129 members of the national staff could be used at once in this work and that all the resources of the organization would be at the disposal of the government for the benefit of women and girls.

Very soon after the declaration of war the National Board appointed a small committee which should be responsible for the war work. It was soon evident, however, that a small committee could not meet the rapidly growing demands. At a specially called meeting of the Field Work Department on May 15, 1917, authorization was given for the appointment of a "War Work Council of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations." This action was ratified by the National Board on May 23, 1917. To this body was given full responsibility for all war emergency work, both in the United States and abroad. The executive of the Field Work Department was made the executive secretary of this council and all the resources of personnel and equipment of the National Board were put at its service.

On June 6, 1917, this War Work Council held its first called conference, to discuss the needs, to determine policy and to decide upon a budget. At that time a budget of $1,000,000 was voted and the work of the council stated to be as follows:

> The indirect service which it can give by recommending and paying the salaries of such trained Association workers as the Federal Commission on Training Camp Activities asks the National Board to provide.
>
> Direct work in the name of the Young Women's Christian Association, under the following divisions:
>
> Extension of work where there are Associations.
>
> Organized work in new centers.
>
> Unorganized work.
>
> The purpose and the aim were to be the "aim and purpose of all Association work," and the program of activities was to be "the usual program of the Association." [2]

Even before that time the Association had embarked upon a considerable program of emergency service, including:

> Investigation of Russian needs and possibilities.
> Correspondence with French women with regard to work in France.
> Club work:
> Plattsburg, New York.
> Junction City, Kansas (Fort Riley).
> Atlanta, Georgia.
> Hostess Houses:
> Plattsburg, New York.
> Fort Niagara, New York.[2]

It was evident that the Association's experience in dealing with and knowledge of women and girls were needed. The first piece of work done for the government was at the training camp for officers at Plattsburg Barracks, New York. This was the first time that women, other than nurses, had ever been permitted inside a United States army camp for work. Within ten days from the time that Colonel Wolfe staked out the plot the building was up and officially opened. It was hardly more than a hut, with kitchenette attachment, dressing and rest rooms and comfortable wicker furniture, intended to provide for the needs of visitors to 5,000 men. A service and hospitality program for women was quickly under way, with the enthusiastic support of the commanding officer.

This concrete and definite proof of the ability of the organization to work rapidly and to provide trained leadership had, no doubt, much to do with the increased responsibility laid upon the organization. The Young Women's Christian Association became one of the seven

national organizations which mobilized their work under the United States government during the war period. During this time its war work was financed through the united war work campaigns, and was carried on under instructions received directly from the government.

The unique contribution of the War Work Council of the Young Women's Christian Association to the government's activities was its emphasis on the interests of women. It was the only women's organization in the group of seven officially recognized organizations. During the entire war period it was administered by women and served as a continual reminder of their service and their needs.

The work done was in line with the purpose and the program of the Young Women's Christian Association before the war. It was because of this previous experience that the Association was called upon for war service. Nothing was undertaken which was new to its policy and which would not have been done at any time if the need and the opportunity had presented. "Where it could, it used the high road; where it was necessary, it blazed new trails. But always there was one objective—the needs of the women and girls of this and of other countries." [1] The very nature of the Young Women's Christian Association keeps it inevitably at the center of problems affecting women and girls. In a time of crisis like the World War that meant a constant facing of new conditions, a close connection with the activities of the War Department of the United States government and a constant rapid mobility. As troops moved so did women and so did the Young Women's Christian Association. In this country, as the needs increased, the program included work for women visitors in camps and work in communities around camps

and navy yards and in large manufacturing centers particularly affected by war conditions.

WORK IN THE UNITED STATES

Under trained leadership, centers for recreation and club work were opened. In those places where there were local Young Women's Christian Associations they were helped to meet war conditions by the opening of special centers in appropriate parts of the town, by the establishment of branches for special groups of girls, or by making possible a larger staff of workers. In all, work was carried on in 198 different communities as well as in the Canal Zone and in Honolulu.

Hostess house work was developed as a service to women visitors in camps. There were 116 such centers in army training camps, four in naval stations, two in marine and two in hospital camps, seven in cities which were embarkation and debarkation ports, and in addition, seven in Hawaii and two in Porto Rico.

One of the most unexpected but interesting pieces of service was the care of the war brides. More than 3,000 brides and 383 children were taken care of by the Young Women's Christian Association. Much of this work was done at the French ports before embarkation. In addition, many of the war brides traveled under the care of the Young Women's Christian Association and were met by Association workers on their arrival in America.

The War Work Council, through its Housing Committee, made practical demonstration of housing for women war workers, both in connection with camps and

factories working on war supplies and in Washington itself. Early in the war a pamphlet containing practical suggestions with regard to housing women and plans for temporary buildings was published by the Housing Committee and sent broadcast through the country, to be used by corporations and groups of people employing women. From this experience the Young Women's Christian Association learned much that has since proved useful—particularly about simplicity of structure and how to provide attractive, cheerful furnishings inexpensively. It learned the psychological value of bright chintzes and gay furniture, in marked contrast to the genteel fawns and greys of the preceding period. At two camps, Upton and Dix, the committee built and maintained Players' Houses to care for the entertainers sent out by the Commission on Training Camp Activities.

War conditions made evident the deplorable lack of facilities for recreation and amusement for the colored girls and women in this country. In addition, large numbers of colored girls and women were entering industry for the first time. A Committee on Colored Work of the War Work Council was organized. Its first and most important task was to secure leaders and volunteer workers who could be trained for positions of responsibility. Through this committee, hostess house work was carried on in seventeen camps, and in forty-nine communities service centers for colored women and girls were organized. Work was also carried on in eight industrial centers, three of which were in munition factories.

During this period of intense nationalism there was constant likelihood of a misunderstanding of foreign

people. Not only was there need of interpreting their point of view to the people of America but there was also the necessity for helping them to understand the war-time regulations of the government. The work of the Young Women's Christian Association for foreign-born women and girls fell in the main into four parts: (1) An International Translation and Service Bureau whose function was to give every kind of service possible through the medium of print in foreign languages. This meant translating bulletins sent out from government offices, sending articles to foreign language newspapers explaining in simple detail how the draft was working, what the Red Cross was for, and similar services. (2) Additional work in foreign communities on the same principles as those which the Association had already found successful in its International Institutes but with a program adapted to the emergency situation. In many instances this meant work in communities near large camps or near munition centers. (3) Home Information Service for the foreign families of enlisted men. This meant putting into camps and war-affected communities workers who were interested in foreign people, who spoke the necessary languages, and who could interpret the camp situation to those at home and keep the men in the camps in touch with their homes in this country and, if possible, in the old country. Nine camps had such hostesses speaking foreign languages.

The fourth type of work carried on for the foreign-born was the inter-country work. This involved the locating of refugees' relatives, protection at the ports, and helping foreign people in America in their efforts to be of service to their suffering countrymen both here and abroad. One part of this work was the provision of training centers where Polish-American young women might fit

themselves to go back to Poland for service after the war. The women thus trained were known as the Polish Grey Samaritans and some forty of them gave conspicuous service in this fashion. On the Mexican border, work was established with incoming and outgoing Mexicans. Hospitality houses were stationed near the bridges, caring for hundreds of women and children daily.

Twenty industrial service centers were opened near munition plants or in industrial communities. The work of these centers helped to sustain the morale of industrial women by providing activities sufficiently varied to meet the need of a strangely mixed group—recreation of all kinds, clubs, opportunity for study, a center of friendliness and good will. In some places big cafeterias were opened, where food could be obtained at a reasonable price; in other places a room registry service for housing was maintained. The only requirement for admission to the privileges of the center was the taking of the following pledge of service:

> It is my desire to serve to the best of my capacity in the ranks of the Woman's Industrial Army. I pledge my loyalty by promoting in every way possible the spirit of service and good will in my work and community.[2]

In the very beginning of the war period the National Board recognized the possibility that standards of industrial and social legislation would be let down because of the pressure for production. At the National Board meeting on May 23, 1917, the following resolution was passed:

> That a telegram be sent to Governor Whitman from the National Board urging that the present labor legislation be upheld.[3]

In the discussion preceding this resolution it was "urged that every member of the board inform herself as to the labor legislation which now exists and to stand for its being upheld."

A Commission on Social Morality, already established as part of the Young Women's Christian Association health program, promoted a lecture program for communities surrounding camps and other centers. In order to facilitate its presentation a tangible relation to some government agency was negotiated. This eventuated in the establishing of a section on women's work in the Social Hygiene Division of the Commission on Training Camp Activities of the War Department. Later on, a Bureau of Social Education initiated a program of health education through physical examinations, lectures upon general health topics, and instructions with regard to proper and wholesome food, clothes and daily living. From June 1, 1917, to July 1, 1919, 11,273 lectures by 183 lecturers were given in 1,204 communities to more than 1,500,000 women and girls.

The crowning effort of this group was the convening, in October 1919, of the first international conference of women physicians. This conference was held at the national headquarters and there were present thirty women physicians from fourteen countries.

A Junior War Work Council was also organized in June 1917 to assist the War Work Council. This group concentrated its efforts largely on work with younger girls in communities near camps, operating particularly through the Patriotic League.

OVERSEAS WORK

The overseas work of the Young Women's Christian Association was not a deliberately planned effort but was undertaken in response to appeals from the women of both France and Russia, and only after thorough investigation and in the firm conviction that the Young Women's Christian Association, as a women's organization, was able to give a service for women which was greatly needed and would in no way duplicate the work of any other agency. All other welfare organizations had men as their first objective. A women's organization was needed in order to keep intact women's point of view, and to serve women as they should be served.

The work with French women in munition factories was done directly in cooperation with the French War Department. The work with women serving the A.E.F. was done in cooperation with the United States Army. In cooperation with the Red Cross, nurses' clubs furnishing opportunities for rest, recreation and companionship were developed in connection with the base hospitals. Of the 12,000 nurses with the American Expeditionary Forces in France it is estimated that 8,000 were served directly or indirectly through these nurses' clubs.

In response to the need not only of nurses but of all American war workers in France, the Young Women's Christian Association established a series of hostess houses where transient women could find lodgings, permanently stationed women a home, and both men and women could procure good meals at a reasonable cost and enjoy American hospitality. Three of these houses were opened in

Paris, others in the provinces, and after the Armistice, in connection with the army of occupation in Germany. All signal corps girls were housed by the Young Women's Christian Association. Later there was opened up port work for foreign war brides of American soldiers and hostess house work at the military cemeteries. Much of the other work of the American Young Women's Christian Association in France also lasted into the months following the close of the war. Its object was to carry hospitality, to provide adequate housing, to meet situations as they arose, and to be ready to give resourceful help in emergencies. Part of this work, particularly the foyer work with French girls in Paris and other cities, was taken over by the French Young Women's Christian Association. The last Young Women's Christian Association worker was recalled from the military cemeteries in June 1925. Since that time the hostess work there has been done by the United States government.

At the request of Russian women, work was started also in Russia, in the spring of 1917, in Petrograd, and a beginning was made in Moscow. The political conditions were, however, changing rapidly and eventually the work had to be withdrawn.

The work as developed in European countries emphasized the training of indigenous leadership which should take over and maintain whatever part of the program was wanted and needed in that country. In certain countries Association work already existed in small compass. This work was aided and strengthened.

The Polish Grey Samaritans, already mentioned, went to Poland as the guests of the Polish government and as

part of the American Relief Administration to help in child feeding and social service. After the war period was over the social service work that they had started was merged with that of other organizations.

In Czechoslovakia, workers sent by the Young Women's Christian Association at the request of Alice Masaryk, daughter of President Masaryk, to make a social work survey, later established a social service training school and developed a program of social service. As a result of this work a request came for the organization of a Young Women's Christian Association movement in Czechoslovakia. This movement is now an independent national Association, a corresponding member of the World's Young Women's Christian Association.

The work started in Russia in 1917 was never resumed, but in 1921 two members of the staff of the Young Women's Christian Association, who had worked in Russia and spoke Russian, were attached to Colonel Haskell's staff of the American Relief Administration and went to Russia to assist in refugee feeding.

In Rumania and in certain centers of the Near East where there had never previously been Young Women's Christian Association work, beginnings were made which developed into Young Women's Christian Associations.

In Italy, Switzerland and Belgium the service carried by American units was made part of the already existing work. There were, in all, serving in Europe under the Overseas Committee of the War Work Council, 407 workers in nine countries.

This war work of the Association, which amounted really to an interlude of some two or three years, has been related at length because in many ways it seems to

have been the end and the beginning of definite periods of Association history. It was the end in the sense that all the experience and knowledge of women and girls that the Association had acquired over its fifty years of history were called upon, mobilized and used in those years for the benefit of women and girls not only in this country but in most countries of the world. At the same time it brought power and prestige and expansion to the organization which it had never had and probably had never wanted and had certainly never previously visualized.*

In common with the whole world, much of the time of the organization in the years since the close of the war has been given to reducing and changing the work after this rapid and in many cases transitory growth.

While the World War was the most spectacular crisis in which the Association has ever taken part, what was done then is probably of less significance than the part which the Association has played in the question of unemployment, over the years. As early as 1876 we find the Philadelphia Association making the following statements: [4]

> As we review our work during these months of business and financial depression, a season of unusual trial to working-women, and extraordinary demands upon our Association, we acknowledge with grateful hearts, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us:"—and, with a deep sense of the "goodness and mercy which have followed us" since the day of our organization, we enter upon another year with renewed vigor in the prosecution of the work which the Master has committed to us.

*Particular acknowledgment is due to Mrs. James Stewart Cushman, chairman of the War Work Council of the National Board, for assistance in clarifying and amplifying the records of the War Work Council.

Applications for help are received and situations of every kind are procured for those applying. The plan of registration enables them to secure reliable reference, so that only those who are worthy are received as applicants, and the result is that the office is becoming the resort of the more respectable classes. A marked improvement is also found in the increased number of persons seeking a higher order of employment, and in the demand for those able to fill positions requiring skilled and educated labor.

And the Providence Association states:

The past year has been the most depressing for the boarders since the establishment of the Home; it seemed almost impossible to find employment sufficiently remunerative to pay the smallest board and leave anything for clothing.

Some of the skilled tailoresses who, six years since, could command their own prices, are now seeking other employment. Temptations to evil are strong in these times of depression, and words from us of encouragement and interest should be equally strong. We endeavor to reduce the board, to meet individual cases, without infringing upon their self-respect and independence. Our motto from the beginning has been, "To help those who help themselves." [5]

In the *International Messenger* for May 1900 appears the following statement:

The relations of the Young Women's Christian Association with the unemployed began early in its history. I can here but note in merest outline what they have grown to be.

In the business world there are times when it is difficult for even a skilled worker to obtain employment. But in ordinary times, as a rule, the unemployed girl is the inefficient girl, lacking the knowledge to enable her to do any one thing well.

> The attitude of the Association toward her has ever been a beneficent one. Time, thought and prayer have been expended in devising wise ways of helping her to become a self-respecting member of society and not merely a skilled worker.[6]

In the third annual report of the Ladies' Christian Association of Memphis in 1879, to the convention of the International Board, the report is made of the way in which the Memphis Association assisted in relief following an epidemic of fever in that city. It is inserted here to show how at that early period Associations endeavored to meet critical local situations:

> The most of our year's work has been done since the fever. At the suggestion of the Ladies' Christian Association, the Mayor employed three ladies to assist in the distribution of the relief sent to his care. We visited each family, investigating their circumstances before recommending them as worthy or needy objects. It was a laborious task, performed in midwinter, but it seemed the only way to reach those whom we desired to aid, and to withhold from the undeserving. Poor human nature is so grasping that those with comfortable means of support were as eager to obtain the charity sent to yellow fever sufferers as those who had suddenly lost every source of income. To convey an idea of what was done, I will give an estimate of what was disbursed by the Mayor's relief at the recommendation of these ladies:
>
> $1,042 in orders on the grocers for provisions, no order exceeding $4; $40.50 in transportation; 54 barrels of flour, and 22,995 pounds of flour in sacks containing 25 or 50 pounds each; 2,800 pounds of beans; 1,606 barrels of coal, never giving over five barrels to one family; 129 blankets,

128 pairs of shoes, besides clothing, cots, mattresses and other things, as we had them to give. . . .

On assisting a family we always try, if possible, to put them in a condition to sustain themselves.[7]

In all the economic depressions that have occurred since the forming of the Young Women's Christian Association, the local Associations have followed similar programs: that of endeavoring to find work when there was any and of helping with relief in the form of food, shelter and clothing, those who were without work. It is interesting to find that the national organization was concerned about the underlying causes and the dangers of unemployment long before concern was shown by the general public. At the convention of 1922 the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved: That the Association study this problem [unemployment], its causes and possible methods of prevention, using for this purpose the conference method, bringing together all elements in the Association.[8]

The next convention, at New York in 1924, considered the problem from the position of the employment service itself, and adopted the following resolution:

Be it resolved: That it be the responsibility of the employment service

1. To stabilize employment by reducing labor turnover, and by considering seasonal unemployment.[9]

No further action was taken by conventions until 1928, when, although the country was in the full tide of prosperity, the unemployment situation was seriously affecting both the industrial and business membership of the Asso-

ciation. At this convention the following resolution was adopted:

1. That local Associations study facts of unemployment in their communities and get these to the public mind.
2. That local Associations study methods for meeting the problems of unemployment, and work with other community organizations in a constructive program of education and action.
3. That local Associations support their business and industrial women's departments in their particular efforts in the next two years to find ways to meet this problem, and suggest that the employment departments take a special responsibility in this work.
4. That the National Board cooperate in the study of unemployment with a view to helping in the promotion of adequate protective and remedial measures in the stabilization of employment for business and industrial women.[10]

The early awareness of this situation on the part of the Young Women's Christian Association was undoubtedly owing to the fact that within its membership were large numbers of girls employed in industry and in business who were themselves feeling the effects of unemployment. In spite of these resolutions it is not until the depression of the nineteen-thirties that local Associations all over the country showed an active interest in the study of the causes of unemployment and began to take action in support of measures which might help to alleviate these situations. Meanwhile, unemployment was rapidly increasing in seriousness, and at the time of the national convention in Detroit, in April 1930, it was seen as a menace to our sense of security and as affecting women and girls more directly and more widely than any similar crisis in the past. Unemployment and its effect on women and girls,

as well as possible remedies for the underlying causes of recurrent crises of unemployment, were discussed in the Industrial and the Business and Professional Assemblies as well as in sixteen of the discussion groups into which the body of delegates divided for three periods. As a result of this discussion, the three so-called Wagner Bills concerned with unemployment were endorsed by the convention. The bills provided for:

1. Long-range planning of public works.
2. Cooperation of the federal government in the maintenance of state and municipal public employment offices.
3. Collection of statistics concerning unemployment by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

As the senate committee was dealing with the bills while the convention was in session, a further resolution authorized the sending of a message from the convention to the senate committee, urging the passage of these bills. At the same time individual delegates and visitors were asked to send similar messages to their senators. The sending of these messages and the receipt of an answering wire from Senator Wagner gave to the convention a sense of direct participation in a matter of public welfare that added reality to its function of determining national polity.

The national Association as well as the local Associations early recognized the necessity of adjusting program to meet the needs of girls and young women in the economic situation. In the fall of 1930 a national conference was called to discuss the responsibility of the Young Women's Christian Associations in meeting this emergency. As a result, specific program plans were sent out to local Associations. In these plans Associations were urged

to play their part in the entire community situation and to work with other agencies in endeavoring to adjust their programs to meet it.

In the first years particularly, the work of the employment bureaus was much increased. The first three months of 1930 brought an increase in applicants of thirty-two per cent over the corresponding months of the previous year. The situation became rapidly so serious that many Associations began to take part in the organizing of "made work." The Young Women's Christian Association in one city, Los Angeles, initiated a plan which resulted in an appropriation of $120,000 by the city for "made work" for women. More than half this amount was administered through the Association.

Meanwhile the Young Women's Christian Association was called upon to take responsibility for administering relief to women and girls who had no near relatives and no margin of savings, particularly the so-called white-collar girl. A large number of women and girls served in this way provided an entirely new clientele for the Association. In 1930, sixty-seven Associations reported that seventy-seven per cent of the people to whom they gave relief had been unknown to them before.

First-hand knowledge of the problems which in normal times confront women workers of all types—industrial, clerical, mercantile and professional, of varying creed, color and nationality—comes to the Association through its clubs and activities. Unemployment bore down particularly heavily on the Negro and the foreign-born. These workers, because of their meager earnings, discrimination against them in employment, and inadequacy of relief provided for them in their communities, were in a serious plight. The Young Women's Christian Association in

many places made special efforts to change public attitudes and to give help to these groups.

As the depression went on and relief was more adequately organized through public agencies, Associations turned more and more of their efforts toward the constructive use of leisure time. Free classes were organized for the unemployed, including bookkeeping, sewing and study classes. Typewriters were provided so that typists out of work could keep up their speed. Girls were given the opportunity and the materials to recondition their own clothing and to keep up their appearance in every way. At the same time, groups were being organized to study the underlying causes of and remedies for unemployment. The amount of free recreation was greatly increased and a more diversified program offered, including music, roller skating, folk festivals, social dancing, teas, swimming and dramatics.

A carefully guarded principle of the Association during this period was that women and girls without employment were not segregated but took their place with girls still employed in the general activities of the Association and were thus helped to maintain their morale. In looking over the history of the depressions in the United States and the history of the Young Women's Christian Association, it is interesting to note that the Association has always started new projects during or just at the end of a depression. The following list is worth noting:

EFFECTS OF DEPRESSIONS ON THE Y.W.C.A.

First Association organized in Boston in 1866, at the close of the Civil War.

Depression of 1873

1873—First student Association organized in Normal, Illinois.

1873—A national conference held in Philadelphia and the Foreign and Home Committees formed.

Depression of 1882-1883

1883—First state Associations organized in Michigan, Ohio, Iowa.

Several new student Associations.

First issue of the *Evangel*—September, 1889.

Depression of 1892

1892—In London a preliminary meeting looking toward the forming of a world organization.

1894—World's Young Women's Christian Association organized.

April 1894—first number of the *International Messenger*.

Depression of 1907

February, 1907—*Association Monthly* started.

1907—Studio Club, New York City.

1908—National Training School, New York City.

Depression of 1914-1915

1915—First town and country conference at Geneva.

National organization opened headquarters and club house at the Pan-Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco.

Depression of 1921

1922—First Industrial Assembly.

To relate cause and effect of depressions and new ventures is probably too neat—and new pieces of work have often taken their rise in times of prosperity. It would seem evident, however, that new needs became apparent in these times of crisis and that adjustments of time and money were made in order to include them in the program.

Such experiences raise the question of the effect of the

business cycle on institutions in general, not only the direct effect of increased or decreased budgets but the even more significant effect of careful scrutiny of program in times of depression and of tolerance of the inefficient and superfluous in times of prosperity.

The depression of the nineteen-thirties has been particularly marked in the Young Women's Christian Association by the application of scientific methods to studies of the local programs, either as part of a whole community study or as an evaluation of the program of the Young Women's Christian Association alone. At the same time, the national organization has made studies of special subjects * such as the leisure-time activities of business women, the work with younger girls, membership practices, standards of local work, and the program of the industrial department. All these studies are designed to provide criteria by which local Associations may test their methods and programs and thus meet not only immediate local conditions but also the wider needs of the whole country.

There have been many cooperative projects in community recreation and adult education during the pressure of these years. There is also increasing interest in the growing subject of the relation of public to private agencies, a subject which has spread beyond the relief agency as such to the question of social planning for the whole community.

* Janet Fowler Nelson, *Leisure-Time Interests and Activities of Business Girls.*
Helen E. Davis, *Report of the Study of Work with Younger Girls.*
Membership Study Committee, *Summary of the Study of and Tentative Recommendations in Regard to Membership Practices and Policies.*
Helen E. Davis, *Discussion Outline for National Study on Association Standards.*
Mrs. Annabelle Stewart, director, *Industrial Study* now being made for the Fourteenth National Convention.

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[2] *Report of the National War Work Council of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (1917-1919), pp. 4, 5, 30.

[3] Unpublished records of the National Board.

[4] "Fifth Annual Report of the Women's Christian Association of Philadelphia," *Faith and Works*, I (February, 1876), pp. 4-5.

[5] "Women's Christian Association of Providence, Rhode Island," *Faith and Works*, III (February, 1878), pp. 91-92.

[6] Buxton, Mrs. W. S. "Relation of the Association to the Unemployed," *International Messenger*, VII (May, 1900), p. 22.

[7] Osborn, H. M. "Report of Association Missionary," *Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Christian Association of Memphis, Tennessee* (1879), pp. 14-17.

[8] *Report of the Seventh National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (Hot Springs, Ark., 1922), p. 335.

[9] *Report of the Eighth National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (New York, 1924), p. 357.

[10] *Report of the Tenth National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (Sacramento, 1928), pp. 104-105.

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CHAPTER X

Breaking Down Barriers

MANY of the conditions of modern life, such as urbanization, voluntary or involuntary segregation of races, nationalities, social and economic groups, tend to split society into sections, each of which exhibits within itself the behavior of the in-group, that is, good-will and cooperation, and toward other groups the behavior of the out-group, that is, hostility and suspicion.[1]

Using as its frame of reference the Christian ideal of a classless society, the Young Women's Christian Association in its seventy-five years of work in the United States has attempted to become, in fact as in theory, an individual- and group-participating organization including in its membership a cross-section of the girls and women of this country.

Toward this difficult end two main methods of working may be identified: the one that of substituting primary for secondary contacts in representatives of the different groups; the other that of developing within each group, leadership which can take its place on equal terms in the association of the whole.

Early in its history there is evidence that the Young Women's Christian Association saw the danger of a purely welfare movement of the privileged doing good to the less privileged, and the consequent failure of the fellowship

idea. The following quotation appears in the magazine *Faith and Works* for November, 1880:

> May we not put ourselves in the places of the sick, the lonely, the stranger, the young women whom we as Women's Christian Associations seek to minister unto, and with deep heart-searchings, ask ourselves if we are doing all we ought to do, if we are really doing to them as we should wish them to do to us if the positions were reversed and we were the friendless ones seeking aid, sympathy or counsel.[2]

It was soon realized that if the desire to include all kinds of women and girls in the membership of the Association should be more than a theory, special and particular plans would need to be made not only for reaching them but, even more, for associating on an equal basis within the fellowship those groups most widely differing from the common norm of white Nordic adults, groups such as the foreign-born, the Negro, the industrial worker and the younger girl. If such plans were not made, the organization would become, as it was already tending to be, a homogeneous group of the middle-of-the-road variety.

Most local Associations started with what would be considered today our business girls, that is, girls working for wages in stores and offices, but soon what might be termed the Association idea spread to student centers, and student Young Women's Christian Associations were organized with student leadership and with program emphases particularly suited to students. Not long after the beginnings of student Associations there began to be stirrings of interest in teen-age girls. From 1881 on, various plans of work and programs were developed for these younger members, until in 1919 these varied activi-

ties were welded into one whole, the Girl Reserve movement of the Young Women's Christian Association, which is the younger membership of the organization. The national aspects of the Girl Reserve movement appear in the summer conferences held in different areas and at the national convention, where the adult leadership of the Girl Reserve movement meets as a group to discuss plans and programs.

It was not long before attention turned to Negro women and girls, who were asking the benefits of the Young Women's Christian Association. The first record of work with Negro women and girls that continued was the work in Dayton, Ohio, organized in 1893. The Association early recognized that if it was to be of real service to Negro women and girls there was involved not only the developing of Negro leadership but also experience and training for both Negro and white women in meeting together their common problems.

In this difficult field of race relations progress has been apparent not so much in the matter of resolutions passed as in life lived. In many communities, south as well as north, branches for colored women and girls are controlled and administered by Negro leadership both lay and professional. At the same time, the working together of Negro and white women in the interests of girls as a whole is increasing. Summer conferences, conventions and group meetings, as well as local committees and boards, provide opportunities for Negro and white women of education and experience to know each other and to work together in solving common problems. Negro women are responsible leaders in the Student and the Industrial Assemblies as well as in meetings of the whole Associa-

tion, and both white and Negro women seem to be learning the difficult lesson of building from experience to higher levels as well as of judging immediate situations in the light of ideal conditions. That in dealing with problems affecting both races the responsible groups shall include representatives of both races, is one of the main principles developed through the years.

It seems clear both from unpublished records of meetings and from hearsay evidence that there has been constant effort on the part of both races to handle this matter of race relations with courage yet with consideration for the interests of the total movement of the Young Women's Christian Association. The danger on the one hand of treating the matter sentimentally, and on the other of using the prestige and power of the organization for the immediate interests of one group, has been on the whole avoided. A consistent attempt over the years, however, to reach standards of relationships a little in advance of those common to the whole community—as for instance the policy of having representatives of both races participate in its meetings in all parts of the country—has resulted in placing the Young Women's Christian Association in the forefront of those organizations which are concerned with the practice as well as the teaching of better race relations. Many problems have been involved, mistakes have been made, and the place of a minority group has been by no means defined as yet, nevertheless the mere holding together of an organization made up of such different elements and with so many conflicting interests has been in itself an achievement in this field.

The conception of the Association as a fellowship of all kinds of women and girls led to early efforts to make it

possible for industrial women and girls to be a responsible part of the organization. In a report of the New York City Association in June 1878 there is a report from a so-called industrial committee. It seems evident, however, that this work was chiefly for instruction in the simpler industrial processes. There was a class in sewing-machine techniques with forty-four women, many of whom afterward found employment in this branch of industry. At this time the Association was also attempting to raise funds to open a dressmaking department, with a competent forewoman. This seems to be one of the first instances of the idea of preparing girls for work in trades rather than only to make their own clothing.[3] Early in the following year, in a report of the San Francisco Association, the statement is made that an industrial department had been established, "the object of which was to provide work for the worthy poor, at reasonable prices, and to provide clothing for the needy sick." [4] A little later comes evidence that this type of early effort, confined to providing simple work in workrooms for the poor or preparing them to take jobs, was not meeting the situation. The following quotation appears in the *Evangel* for February 1900:

> Last summer at our city conferences, attention was especially called to "the factory problem," to the fact that at least 56 of our 60 city Associations are in factory towns, and yet from answers received from questions sent out it would seem that very few are reaching the factory young women in any numbers.[5]

Gradually some contact was made directly in factories, usually at the noon hour, with girls working in industry. The program in its beginnings was entirely a religious one, consisting of prayer meetings, hymn singing to the accom-

paniment of a melodeon laboriously carried from factory to factory, and the telling of Bible stories. Such a beginning served chiefly as a way to bring about personal acquaintance between factory girls and Association workers. As this personal acquaintance grew the program changed.

Soon after that time, a flier was taken in attempting to work with industrial women and girls in mill villages of the south. In the *Evangel* for 1904, in an article entitled "The Association in a Mill Village," the following statements appear:

> Very much has been done by the company to make Pelzer a model mill town and to better the condition of its employees. And one of these attempts has been the bringing in of the Young Women's Christian Association. . . .
>
> After much calling among the people and explanation to them of the object of the work, classes were begun in March. It seemed best to limit the number in each class to about twenty or twenty-five. During March and April we organized two clubs, one studying Japan, the other reading Kate Douglas Wiggin's "Rebecca." A mothers' meeting and two classes in night school, each come twice a week. The attendance at all was very good until the coming of hot weather and a number of the girls have been faithful all through the summer. A number of social evenings have been given, which on the whole have been very successful, though the secretary's ingenuity has been taxed to the very utmost on some occasions to afford good humor as well as entertainment.
>
> Not until after some months did it seem wise to attempt organization of the Association proper.[6]

Somewhat later an Association was organized in the Colgate Soap Factory in Jersey City. In the *Evangel* for

April 1906 the following comment is made on the work in factories:

> It is a comparatively easy task for a sweet-spirited, attractive young woman to gain an entrance to a factory where numbers of girls are at work, and it is quite possible for her to find some common ground with them and have an interesting visit out of which an organization may grow and other organizations may multiply. But the work has vastly greater significance than can be indicated by mere numbers influenced. It must be a definite force in building up the best type of citizenship. The Association is and ever should be an upholder of ideals.[7]

Just at this time, 1906, came the forming of the present national organization which drew together the various experimental efforts being made over the country and provided both the means and the leadership for further efforts to meet the desires and needs of industrial girls. It was becoming evident to the leaders in the organization that if the Young Women's Christian Association was to be free in its work with industrial girls, free not only to provide for them the programs that they desired but also to help them in improving their conditions of labor, it was not possible to be dependent on employers for places of meeting and other favors. Therefore work was gradually withdrawn from mill villages and as factory branches. As many of these were well established, it was a long time before they were finally discontinued, one of the last remaining being that in the Larkin Factory in Buffalo, which was discontinued only in 1925. In other words, the Young Women's Christian Association was apparently realizing, though perhaps dimly, that there were conflicts of interests between workers and employers and that as a Chris-

tian organization it must be free either to take no side or to take the side that seemed to be that of right and justice. This point of view was gradually focusing, not only in the national but also in the world organization.

In 1906 the Executive Committee of the World's Young Women's Christian Association decided that the place of the Young Women's Christian Association in social and industrial life should be a major topic of discussion at the World's Young Women's Christian Association conference to be held in Berlin in 1910. Florence Simms, national industrial secretary for the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States, was asked to be chairman of an international commission to make a study of this subject. This commission's report was called by Miss Simms the "charter" of the industrial work of the Association. The resolutions as passed by the Berlin conference recognized the social significance of the teachings of Jesus and urged upon all national Associations the study of the social problems of the day, especially as they affected young women.

These resolutions were sent to each national Association belonging to the World's Association. Each was invited to adopt them as a statement of its own policy. As a result of this action resolutions were brought by the Committee on the National Board's Report to the national convention held at Indianapolis in 1911. These resolutions were as follows:

> XII. Inasmuch as the utterly inadequate wages paid to thousands of young women throughout the country often hamper the work of the Association as a great preventive agency, and as the white slave traffic is admitted to be closely related to the lack of a living wage, the Association

recognizes its responsibility as an influential unit in the body of Christian public opinion, and accordingly it is recommended:

a. That the Association shall seek to educate public opinion regarding the need of establishing a minimum living wage and of regulating the hours of labor compatible with the physical health and development of wage-earners.

b. That the Association shall declare its belief in the right of a woman over sixteen years of age in good health, working a full day, to a living wage which shall insure her the possibility of a virtuous livelihood.

c. That the Association, recognizing the necessity of legislation for the regulation of hours and wages of wage-earners in industry and trade hereby expresses its sympathy with the great purpose of securing the determination by law of a minimum living wage for women.

d. That the Association, while endeavoring to improve the industrial condition of the working girl shall point steadfastly to a higher standard of faithful service and achievement for the worker and of justice and consideration for the employer.

XIII. That, in order to make more far-reaching the contact of the Young Women's Christian Association with women in industry, the extension of Association work into factories through noon meetings, classes and informal clubs be continued; and that wherever possible, in preference to organizing Associations within factory walls the establishment of rented centers in the industrial sections of cities be advocated and employers be encouraged to contribute to the funds of the central Association, which shall employ the secretaries in charge of this work.[8]

It is probably true that the significance of these statements was not realized by the convention. Women had not been given the suffrage and the possibilities of social legis-

lation in this country were only vaguely comprehended. It was, however, in the light of these recommendations that industrial work in the local Associations was promoted by the national organization.

In 1912 the first attempts were made to organize the industrial membership of the Young Women's Christian Association on a national basis. The following statements quoted from an address by Florence Simms to the 1922 Industrial Assembly appear in the report of the National Board in 1924:

> You have been accomplishing several things in these twelve years since you really began to be a movement—for you did begin to be that when you formed your field federations. In the first place, you have dignified work until you have made girls proud to be workers in industry; you have stood together for an ideal, the honor and the integrity of the worker, until you have changed the point of view of very many girls. You have enlarged your thinking in many cases from a purely individual thinking to a group thinking; you have ceased to think only of the individual, and you think of your relationship to society; you have assumed a very much greater social responsibility.
>
> We are organized to be a movement of industrial women of the Young Women's Christian Association, to try to permeate the womanhood of industry with a Christian idea, and to help to build a Christian order; to try to educate public opinion by our own experience as to what the needs of that order are and as to the conditions of today which must be changed if we are to give women the fullest kind of life.[9]

Through this organization of a national movement of industrial girls within the Young Women's Christian Association has come not only the opportunity for wider

development of the leadership abilities of industrial girls but also the opportunity and the possibility of their functioning as an active and powerful part of the national Association. The Industrial Assembly now meets in connection with the national convention of the Young Women's Christian Association. It makes recommendations to the convention and is articulate both through its group representatives and through the contribution of individuals to discussions.

The question of the including of foreign-born, and in many cases non-English speaking, women and girls in the Young Women's Christian Association had little attention until after the present national organization was formed. The first efforts made by the Association were confined to classes in English for foreigners. It was soon recognized that this one activity made meager and often very unsatisfactory contacts, and plans were laid for developing a program which should not only meet the needs of foreign women and girls on a wider basis but should also help them to find their place within the Association.

After several years of experimentation on the part of the National Board, the plan known as International Institute work was developed. This particular plan is for those communities in which there is a fairly large foreign population. The essence of the idea is the establishing of a separate center of work, so located as to be convenient to the foreign groups and having, under the leadership of an American general secretary, an employed staff who speak the main languages represented in the foreign communities and, largely using the case-work method, minister to their needs and help them to share in the fellowship of the whole.

In smaller places foreign communities departments have been formed, with some of the ideas but a less formal set-up than in the communities with a large foreign population. The policy of reaching foreign women and girls through the medium of their own language is a major element in the work of these departments. This group within the Young Women's Christian Association also has come to have its national manifestation in its Conference of International Institutes, which has met in connection with the national convention or as a kindred group of the National Conference of Social Work.

The last group of women and girls to receive group recognition in the Association was the business and professional women. From the earliest days business women and girls have been a part of the Association, but as individuals, not as a group. At the close of the World War it was evident that the place held by women in the commercial world was not only important but permanent and that as a group these women and girls were meeting problems and opportunities for which they were little prepared.

One of the immediate responsibilities of the Young Women's Christian Association seemed, therefore, to be to help this group to form its own independent organization, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women.* This was accomplished in 1919. There were still, however, in the local communities many business women, particularly between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, who wanted and needed the facilities of the Young Women's Christian Association. These younger business and professional women members of the Young Women's Christian Association have also developed their

* See page 153.

own national expression, the Assembly of Business and Professional Women, which meets in connection with the national convention.

The effect on the Young Women's Christian Association of the attempts to reach these different groups by special plans and programs adapted to their needs resulted in a highly departmentalized organization, particularly in the larger Associations, oftentimes with little provision for the normal flow of intercourse and fellowship between the various groups. An interesting national example of an attempt to promote understanding between groups has been summer groups of students in industry. This plan was started in the summer of 1921 when six college students spent the months of July and August as industrial workers in the city of Denver, meeting each week in seminar to study the significance of their experience and relate it to community life. The next year there were similar groups in three cities. This plan was followed later, in those communities where there was both a student center and industrial work in the local Association, by discussion groups made up of students and girls in industry, on economics and sociology.[9]

In this process of helping to bring about better understanding between groups the Young Women's Christian Association has recognized two distinct steps. First, that of reaching the different groups and preparing them to meet others on equal terms, and second, the actual promotion of association between them. There are times when this specialized approach has seemed to be building barriers rather than breaking them down. Nevertheless, the root idea of the Association has been the association of effort through doing things together. The following statement

appears in the report of the National Board to the Eighth National Convention in 1924:

> In the quaint language of the fifties, the purpose of their getting together, for one group of our founders, is stated as follows: "We, the undersigned, believing that increase of social virtue, elevation of character, intellectual excellence, and the spread of religion can best be accomplished by associated effort . . . do hereby adopt for our mutual government the following constitution." The root idea of the Association always has been association of effort, doing things together. In recent times a technique of group thinking and action is being acquired and perfected. As fast as may be with the slender means at its disposal the National Board is stimulating the use of such cooperative processes, urging the widest possible application of the cooperative principle, standing for the cooperative spirit. We declare the Association to be in essence a fellowship, a fellowship of persons, the cement of their fellowship being the purpose of the organization.[9]

The signs of progress seem at times to be few and results in terms of numbers discouraging. The degree of success attained by the Young Women's Christian Association in bringing about a better understanding between the various kinds of women and girls in the United States can be measured, in one way, from the fact that with the exception of girls under eighteen, the national convention, which determines national policies, includes representatives of these various groups as official voting delegates in considerable numbers. It is a somewhat anomalous situation in that few local boards of directors of Associations are equally representative and consequently the policies of the national organization set by convention action are de-

termined by a group proportionately different from the groups which in local Associations have final decision on local policies. This would seem to be a matter needing careful consideration before it reaches the point where tensions would inevitably develop.

Such a situation arouses the questions of the place of a sub-group within a larger group and of the divided loyalties arising from the conflict of interests of the part as against the whole. This problem is very different from that of two coordinate groups with certain common and certain divided interests. It involves the question of a hierarchy of values and the discovery of those points where the concern of the part determines the course of action of the whole or where the part is subservient to the wider interests of the larger group.

SOURCES

[1] Park and Burgess. *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 283.

[2] Editorial. "Seest Thou This Woman?" *Faith and Works*, VI (November, 1880), p. 38.

[3] Crosby, M. T. "Letter from New York Association," *Faith and Works*, III (June, 1878), p. 155.

[4] Report from the San Francisco Association in *Faith and Works*, IV (February, 1879), p. 91.

[5] Author unknown. "The Factory Problem," *Evangel*, XI (February, 1900), pp. 10-11.

[6] McGaughey, Hester. "The Association in a Mill Village," *Evangel*, XVI (November, 1904), pp. 15-16.

[7] McLean, Dr. Annie Marion. "Methods of Industrial Betterment," *Evangel*, XVIII (April, 1906), pp. 16-20.

[8] *Report of the Third Biennial Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America* (Indianapolis, 1911), pp. 108-109.

[9] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Eighth National Convention* (1924), pp. 94, 100, 102, and introductory statement.

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CHAPTER XI

Taking Stock for the Future

THE definition of an institution as a mechanism through which groups of people satisfy certain fundamental interests is clearly applicable to the Young Women's Christian Association. This organizational expression of religious fervor, born at a period when a wave of evangelical piety was sweeping over the nation, and finding its program in the new needs and desires of women incident on their advent in large numbers into the economic world outside their own homes, rapidly attracted members.

As it has developed, over the years, the Young Women's Christian Association has to some degree in the last seventy-five years helped women in the United States to satisfy directly three of the four basic wishes as classified by W. I. Thomas:

> We divide wishes into four classes: (1) the desire for new experience; (2) the desire for security; (3) the desire for recognition; (4) the desire for response.[1]

A growing organization, composed entirely of women even in its highest and most responsible offices, the Young Women's Christian Association did much to win recognition for women at a time when their interests were extending outside the home and they were looking for a field of service in the community and the nation. The desire for security, too, has found some fulfillment in the corporate Christian purpose, with its emphasis on an inner secur-

ity dependent on the Christian conception of a friendly universe and a God of love. At first sight there may seem to have been little chance for the spirit of adventure or "new experience," but from the time when it was an unheard of thing for women to manage budgets and finances of organizations on a large scale, to the present with its sallies into the difficult fields of race relations, industrial unrest, international cross-currents, and differing aspects of Christian philosophy, women have found in the Young Women's Christian Association an opportunity to attack problems, to pursue new ideas, to work out new solutions in specific instances, and to dare the misunderstanding of the more static elements in community life.

The morale developed through this allegiance to a common purpose has shown itself repeatedly in a determined persistence in given policies, in spite of opposition, and in the subordination of individual interests to the general attitudes and opinions. Such collective behavior is illustrated in the reiteration by successive conventions of the principle of collective bargaining and in the freedom of religious expression evidenced in the changes in the basis of membership. It should be recalled in connection with this point that the Young Women's Christian Association represents a cross-section of the girls and women of this country economically and socially, as well as all branches of the Christian faith.

This complexity of the Young Women's Christian Association, made up of many different kinds of women and girls doing many kinds of things, interested in many aspects of life, is apparently baffling not only to the general public but to its own leadership. It reflects the complexity of the modern world. Looked at over the years, the Young Women's Christian Association has, at different times and

under different circumstances, characterized itself as a woman movement, as a social agency, as an educational organization, as a recreational agency, and as a religious organization. The only way in which harmony and integration can be found in these differing interests and points of view is by persistent effort to consider the Association as a whole, just as the Association itself has attempted always to look at women and girls whole, and to face their many needs and desires, thus helping them to develop a philosophy for the whole of life. More important than any of its separate aspects, therefore, seems to be the fact that the Young Women's Christian Association as an organization is all these various things at once, subordinated much of the time, and at all periods of crisis, to a dominating religious purpose which is the touchstone for its decisions. Because of this rather loose unity it is easily apparent that there is danger of developing a staff of highly specialized workers equipped to do particular tasks but often lacking sympathy with the central purpose of the organization.

Certainly there appears to be confusion in regard to the function of the Association. In reports, articles and technical pamphlets, questions are raised as to just what is the job of the Young Woman's Christian Association, what its program should be, what its place is in the life of communities today. Different answers are given at different times, but there is little consensus over a continuing period. New programs are taken up lightly and responsibilities assumed often with too little study of actual need. This situation has appeared in local Associations, where residences have been opened for which there was not demand in sufficient numbers to make possible an economical housing unit.

The fact that the question of the place of the Young Women's Christian Association in the community appears frequently in the programs of conferences and conventions would seem to indicate at least doubt of the essential usefulness of the Young Women's Christian Association to community life, though there are indications that such questions arise out of a perhaps overzealous desire on the part of the Association to meet all needs of all women at all times.

The Young Women's Christian Association seems to have suffered at various times from an inferiority complex through the failure of social work in general to recognize the techniques of group work as legitimate professional equipment for social workers. The Conference of Social Work itself, as well as the curricula of schools of social work, have until recently failed to make this recognition of group-work techniques as essential to social work. There is also a tendency within the Association to make artificial distinctions between program and administration. The attitude appears to be, that leading a club of girls in singing is program, and helping a board of directors to work out its relations with other organizations in the community is administration.

It is evident from reports that the organization itself is aware of many of the problems it is facing. In the report of the National Board to the convention of 1928, made up of delegates from local Associations, the following statement appears in regard to administering the organization:

> There is far too large an element of domination in the Association, even though that domination has on the whole expanded from being the domination of an individual to that of a small group.
>
> The main part of this whole question of democratic ad-

ministration is the membership problem. We go forward in the optimistic belief that it is possible to have a reasonable proportion of the voting membership of any Association intelligent and interested participators in the forming of policy. There are times, however, when we wonder whether that faith is chimerical. . . .

Of all the problems that a city Association is facing, the most serious and far-reaching is the question of whether or not the Association can be administered in democratic fashion.[2]

There is evident also a continuing struggle to keep the organization a truly membership-participating organization as well as an organization which provides varied types of service to women and girls.

There is apparent a lack of sufficient leadership of the highest quality both among lay and professional workers. This seems to tend to concentrate power and control in the hands of the few and to continue the same leadership over long periods of years without the invigorating effect of changes and new points of view.

The intention of the organization to meet the needs of women and girls, whatever they are, has meant that as the social and economic conditions of women have changed, the program of the Association has changed also. The present indications seem to be that the Association is feeling it necessary to give more attention than ever before to the problems of the individual girl within the group, in the effort to help her build a philosophy of life and a conception of her own place in the social order which will make life for her a happier and a richer thing. There are also indications that as women in general are becoming more accustomed to doing the work of responsible citizens, the Young Women's Christian Association as an organiza-

tion is taking a larger part in developing intelligent opinion, particularly in those fields that are of great interest to women, such as conditions under which industrial women work, peace, health, and all matters affecting children.

There appears to be an increased differentiation of the task of the National Board as the executive body of the national organization, from the task of the local Association. The original and primary responsibilities of the National Board were to organize new local Associations and to act in an advisory relationship to all local Associations in providing them with the accumulated experience of the entire country. In later years this has become a smaller proportion of the total national program than in the beginning. Today local Associations look to the national organization to carry on for them the work which no one local Association can do for itself. An outstanding example is the work done in foreign countries.

There is also greater interest on the part of the whole Association in the United States in the work of the World's Young Women's Christian Association. For a period, any relationship of the national Association in the United States to the World's Young Women's Christian Association was assumed to be almost entirely because of the work which the Association of the United States did in other countries. Recently there has appeared a conception of the World's Association as an opportunity for the joint functioning of the national Associations in much the same way that the national organization in the United States functions for local Associations.

Another important trend is the emphasis of the Young Women's Christian Association on its fellowship aspects rather than on its institutional aspects. The result of this

fellowship is a wholeness in the total movement—world, national and local.

Certain material facts about the Young Women's Christian Association, such as its ownership of buildings in the majority of communities where it is organized, its policy of employing on all programs a trained professional leadership that works side by side with the lay leadership, give a kind of obvious stability to the organization which in some cases tends to be substituted for vitality of interest on the part of the leaders and for flexibility of program. The invigorating streams of newer ideas and dynamic purpose come apparently from the repeated, though not constant, efforts to widen the base of responsible effort in the Association, both local and national; to take on new interests of women as they arise; and periodically to true up the general aims, as seen in program and policy, to the philosophy of building both an individual and a social point of view after the pattern of the Christian faith. The effect of equipment and of standardization of the form of organization on policies and the development of leadership is an interesting question for further study.

The results of the depression of the nineteen-thirties in limiting the lives of women economically, professionally and politically, are having their effect on program. The increased leisure time of women presents also an increasing opportunity to an organization which not only desires to help women to satisfactory living but also must use, if its program expands, increasing numbers of lay workers. In Volume I of the study, *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, the following statement about women appears:

> The diminution of the home occupations and activities of women opens several possibilities. One is the entrance of

women into industry as has been noted. If there were more part-time jobs the movement would probably be accelerated. Another possibility is the entrance of women into civic work and political activities. A third is the heightened standard of the quality of housework. A fourth is more recreation and leisure. The future position of women will be determined by the degree of flow into these channels and the problem is to direct this flow into the channels most desirable. Meanwhile, the tradition lingers that woman's place is in the home and the social philosophy regarding her status has not changed as rapidly as have the various social and economic organizations. The problem of changing these lagging attitudes amounts in many cases to fighting for rights and against discrimination. Women are newcomers into the outside world hitherto mainly the sphere of men. Many barriers of custom remain and the community is not making the most of this potential supply of able services.[3]

To an organization which over the years has devoted much of its effort to the developing of woman leadership among all classes such a situation presents a definite challenge.

With so general a philosophy as that of working toward the goal of the Christian ideal of life both for the individual girl and woman and in society itself, the tendency to spread thin over a wide area of specific programs is always evident.

In classifying the tasks to which the organization gives itself the following statement appears in *Guiding Principles and Program Emphases* prepared for and accepted by the convention of 1934:

Associations should continue their traditional emphasis on the following primary aspects of their program, with appro-

priate changes and additions to meet the special needs arising from the economic depression:

> Building an educational and recreational program for the development and enrichment of the individual.
>
> Serving girls and women in various forms of individual adjustment, in employment, housing and food service.
>
> Working as a social force or movement for a better society.[4]

Even this attempt at being specific in philosophy is nevertheless wide as human needs and is little help in providing controls and guideposts for determining definite program. A repeated trend has shown itself in recent years to make centers at the periphery of the movement, that is, in some particular cause such as that of industrial conditions or interracial problems, rather than to use persistently, as was true in earlier years, the Christian faith as its center.

With the increased specialization in the social work field it seems evident that some responsible group or groups—the biennial convention of the national organization, made up of delegates from local Associations, or the National Board, the executive body of the national organization—must determine definite and specific emphases for program for periods of years, possibly biennially, if the vigor and the vitality of the organization are not to be dispelled by centrifugal action of its various parts.

In his book, *International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations,* Dr. Ernest Johnson speaks as follows:

> . . . the survey finds the Christian Associations studied to be, essentially and irreducibly, fellowships for the development of personality in young men and young women, boys

and girls, in accord with a Christian character ideal, central in which is that presented in the personality of Jesus. This does not mean that the Associations are everywhere running true to this type or that they do not frequently stray far from the norm here indicated. It means rather that they reveal an actual or potential unity on the basis of this concept and that only on this basis can any real integrity be found in them, taken as a whole. It means also that when, as sometimes happens, an Association tends to become a mere service agency, opportunistic in program, it tends to depart from its true function and to become just one agency among many, a creature of its immediate environment and without continuity of life or distinctiveness of function.[5]

The Young Women's Christian Association is one of the oldest of the social agency institutions in this country. This fact in itself does not provide a valid reason for continued existence. In the experience, the training and the wisdom stored up through the years, in its flexibility and creativeness in meeting the problems of the present and then making its contribution to the lives of women and girls, motivated by its corporate Christian purpose, is the true vitality of the organization.

Many problems present themselves as a result of this study of one institution. One of the most persistent is that of democracy, or, as it might be defined, the steadily widening base of active responsibility in the control of policy and program. This development, begun through having individuals of varying life experiences share in the control of the institution, has reached the place where groups such as the Industrial Assembly and the Business Assembly are taking their place in the whole. The policy of how to give due place to groups in an institution still

organized on the basis of individual participation is still undiscovered.

Up to the present, the Young Women's Christian Association, though early crystallized into a somewhat rigid institutional mold, has succeeded in adapting itself to changing circumstances. The concepts operating in the community in regard to institutions are continually evident in the local Association, however, and present dangers and difficulties. The concept of institutional blindness—the tendency to see the social scene from the viewpoint of one particular institution—is constant and shows in various ways. Less evident in the Young Women's Christian Association is the concept that institutions tend to prolong their life for the sake of prolonging it. Where this is evident, it is more often found in relation to some particular program or the continued use of a particular building rather than to the total organization. Because of its varied character and general aim such a concept is less easy to identify in the Young Women's Christian Association than in organizations of a more objective type.

The danger of administrative obstruction is apparent at several points, most clearly at the place of corporate action on matters of public opinion, particularly in connection with legislation. The inevitable tension between the demands of a widespread program of activities and the desires of the membership for social action creates crises and demands a formula of adjustment not easily available.

Contribution control is another concept that needs consideration. With the blurring of identity resulting from the joint raising of current funds through community chests, this question has been diluted, but it will inevitably arise as long as an institution operating in the field of con-

troversy seeks and receives general community financial support.

The impossibility of separating the Young Women's Christian Association or any other institution from the context in which it exists is apparent, but the difficulties of rapid adjustment to the kaleidoscopic change in society today, and the social unrest everywhere evident, create the constant danger of this or any other institution's dropping out of the main stream of life and change, into the quiet of a backwater.

An institution such as the Young Women's Christian Association, which stresses the autonomy of the local Association and at the same time uses geographical sections—towns, cities, districts—as its units of organization, must face inequalities of development and power in these local units. The place of the large city Association in relation to the whole—its influence owing to size, power, prestige, highly trained and numerous employed staff—is one to be reckoned with. There is the possibility of a direct relation between the development of work in these large Associations and the trend of the national organization which as yet is hardly recognized.

If there is to be careful statecraft in the development of the Young Women's Christian Association as an organization it would seem necessary to give particular attention to the part played by the national convention in determining policy; the relation of group development and action to individual participation; the function of large city Associations in the whole; the relation of social action to community support; and the method of expressing a Christian purpose which is ecumenical in scope.

SOURCES

[1] Restatement from a paper by W. I. Thomas in *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* by Park and Burgess (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 489.

[2] *Report of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America to the Tenth National Convention* (1928), p. 15.

[3] *Recent Social Trends in the United States,* a report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933), Vol. I, Introduction, p. xlvi.

[4] *Guiding Principles and Program Emphases* for the Biennium 1934-1936 as Adopted by the Convention (1934), p. 8.

[5] International Survey Committee. *International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations* (New York: Young Men's Christian Association, 1932), p. 401.

APPENDIX

The Christian Bases for Determining Eligibility to Affiliation with the National Organization

I. The Original "Church Basis"

Any Young Women's Christian Association may be a member of this organization upon application to the National Board and upon filing with it a copy of its constitution, showing that its voting and office-holding membership is limited to women who are members of Protestant evangelical churches.*

Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution of the Y.W.C.A.'s of the U. S. A.

* By Protestant evangelical churches are meant those churches which, because of their oneness in Jesus Christ as their divine Lord and Saviour are entitled to representation in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The list of churches which have availed themselves of this privilege up to date will be found on record at the office of the National Board.

II. First Personal Basis for Student Associations. Adopted by the National Convention, 1920

Any student Young Women's Christian Association may be admitted to membership whose constitution embodies the following provisions:

The Young Women's Christian Association of ..... affirming the Christian faith in God, the Father; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord and Saviour; and in the Holy Spirit, the Revealer of truth and Source of power for life and service; according to the teaching of the Holy Scripture and the witness of the Church, declares its purpose to be:

PURPOSE

(1) To lead students to faith in God through Jesus Christ;
(2) To lead them into membership and service in the Christian Church;
(3) To promote their growth in Christian faith and character, especially through the study of the Bible;
(4) To influence them to devote themselves, in united effort with all Christians, to making the will of Christ effective in human society, and to extending the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

MEMBERSHIP

Any woman of the institution may be a member of the Association provided:
(1) That she is in sympathy with the Purpose of the Association;
(2) That she makes the following declaration: "It is my purpose to live as a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of the Y.W.C.A.'s of the U. S. A.

III. First Personal Basis for Associations Other Than Student. Adopted by the National Convention, 1926

Any Young Women's Christian Association other than student may be a member of the national organization upon application to the National Board and upon filing with it a copy of its constitution, showing

A. That its voting and office-holding membership is limited to women who are members of Protestant evangelical churches;
B. That its constitution embodies the following:
   I. Preamble
   The Young Women's Christian Association of ....., affirming the Christian faith in God, the Father; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord and Saviour; and in the Holy Spirit, the Revealer of truth and Source of power for life and service; according to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the witness of the Church, declares its purpose to be

II. Purpose

1. To associate young women in personal loyalty to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord;
2. To lead them into membership and service in the Christian Church;
3. To promote growth in Christian character and service through physical, social, mental and spiritual training;
4. To become a social force for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

III. Qualifications

1. *For Electors.* Any woman or girl of the community, over eighteen years of age, may become an elector in the Association provided she makes the following declaration: I desire to enter the Christian fellowship of the Association. I will loyally endeavor to uphold the purpose in my own life and through my membership in the Association.
2. *For Board Members.* Members of the board shall be chosen from the electors of the Association. Three-fourths of the members of the board, including three-fourths of the officers of the Association, shall be members of churches eligible to membership in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.
3. *For Delegates.* Three-fourths of the voting members of each local delegation at the national convention must be members of churches eligible to membership in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of the Y.W.C.A.'s of the U. S. A.

IV. Second Personal Basis for Student Associations. Adopted by the National Convention, 1928

Any student Young Women's Christian Association may be admitted to membership where the constitution embodies the following provisions:

Purpose

The Young Women's Christian Association of ....., a member of the Young Women's Christian Associations of

the United States of America, and a participant in the World's Student Christian Federation, declares its purpose to be:

We, the members of the Young Women's Christian Association of ....., unite in the desire to realize full and creative life through a growing knowledge of God.

We determine to have a part in making this life possible for all people.

In this task we seek to understand Jesus and to follow Him.

Article II, Section 3, of the Constitution of the Y.W.C.A.'s of the U. S. A.

V. Second Personal Basis for Associations Other Than Student. Adopted by the National Convention, 1934

Any Young Women's Christian Association other than student may be a member of the national organization upon application to the National Board and upon filing with it a copy of its constitution, showing:

A. That its voting and office-holding membership is limited to women who are members of Protestant evangelical churches,

or

B. That its constitution embodies the following:

We, the Young Women's Christian Association of ....., a member of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America, declare our purpose to be:

To build a fellowship of women and girls devoted to the task of realizing in our common life those ideals of personal and social living to which we are committed by our faith as Christians.

In this endeavor we seek to understand Jesus, to share his love for all people, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Qualifications

1. *For Electors.* Any woman or girl of the community, eighteen years of age or over, who accepts this purpose by assenting to the following declaration shall be entitled to electoral membership in the Association.

Together with other members of the ..... Association, I desire to belong to this fellowship and to share in the responsibility for the realization of the purpose.

2. *For Board Members.* Members and officers of the board shall be electoral members of the Association.
3. *For Delegates.* Voting delegates to the convention shall be chosen from the electoral members of the Association.

Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of the Y.W.C.A.'s of the U. S. A.

Constitution of the World's Young Women's Christian Association —1934—*

Article II. Basis

Faith in God the Father as Creator and in Jesus Christ his only Son as Lord and Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit as Revealer of truth and Source of power for life and service, according to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

Article III. Aim

The World's Young Women's Christian Association seeks to organize, develop and unite national Associations which, accepting its basis or one in conformity with it, endeavor to extend the Kingdom of God according to its principles, and to bring young women to such knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour as shall manifest itself in character and conduct.

It also calls all national Associations to promote Christian principles of social and international conduct by encouraging the development of a right public conscience such as shall strengthen all those forces which are working for the promotion of peace and better understanding between classes, nations and races; believing that the world social order can only be made Christian through

* The original document is in French. This is a translation.

individuals devoted to the single purpose of doing God's will, and that through obedience to the law of Christ there shall follow the extension of his Kingdom, in which the principles of justice, love and the equal value of every human life shall apply to national and international as well as to personal relations.

Article IV. Principles

The World's Young Women's Christian Association desires to be representative of all sections of the Christian Church in so far as they accept the basis. It includes in the field of its activities young women without distinction of creed, and desires to enlist the service of young women for young women in their spiritual, intellectual, social and physical advancement, and to encourage their fellowship and activity in the Christian Church. The World's Young Women's Christian Association also pledges itself to assign a primary position to Bible study and prayer.

1855 Beginnings in England. Lady Kinnaird opens the North London Home, or General Female Training Institute, as the first Young Women's Christian Association.

Miss Emma Robarts of Barnet begins the Prayer Union.

1858 November 24. Ladies' Christian Association organized in New York City.

Young Women's Christian Improvement Association, formed in connection with the London Home, offers educational classes.

1859 Agitation for Young Women's Christian Association in Boston, Mass. Mrs. Lucretia Boyd outlines a plan.

1860 June 1. Boarding home opens in Amity Place, New York City, under Ladies' Christian Association.

Meetings held in New York City factories by Ladies' Christian Association.

1866 March 3. Boston Young Women's Christian Association organized (name "Young Women's Christian Association" appears for first time in America).

Singing taught in Boston Association.

1867 April 23. Providence, R. I., Women's Christian Association organized.

June 3. Hartford, Conn., Young Women's Christian Association organized.

July 23. Providence Association opens combination home.

Pittsburgh, Pa., Women's Christian Association organized.

Astronomy and physiology taught in Boston Association.

1868 June. Cincinnati, Ohio, Women's Christian Association organized.

November 10. Cleveland, Ohio, Women's Christian Association organized.
December. St. Louis, Mo., Women's Christian Association organized.
Penmanship and bookkeeping taught in Boston Association.

1869 Botany taught in Boston Association.

1870 Women's Christian Association of Dayton, Ohio, organized.
Women's Christian Association of Utica, N. Y., organized.
Women's Christian Association of Washington, D.C., organized.
Women's Christian Association of Buffalo, N. Y., organized.
November. Women's Christian Association of Philadelphia, Pa., organized.

1871 February. Women's Christian Association of Germantown, Pa., organized.
June 22. Women's Christian Association of Newark, N. J., organized.
October 9-10. First national conference of Women's Christian Associations, held in Hartford.
Women's Christian Association of Springfield, Mass., organized.

1872 Hartford dedicates first building erected for the use of the Young Women's Christian Association.
November 12. Young women's meetings for prayer begin at Normal, Ill.
Class in machine sewing conducted by New York City Association.
Miss Ella Doheny commences Sunday afternoon Bible class in New York City Association.

1873 First Young Women's Christian Association organized in a student center, Normal University, Normal, Ill.

1874 History taught in Boston Association.
Telegraphy taught in Philadelphia Association.

1875 October 12-15. Women's Christian Association conference becomes international.

November 4. Young Ladies' Christian Association of Northwestern College, Naperville, Ill., organized (later Young Women's Christian Association).

1876 October 17. Young Women's Christian Association organized in Southern Illinois Normal University, Carbondale, Ill.

October 21. Young Women's Christian Association of Olivet College, Olivet, Mich., organized.

1877 National conference of Women's Christian Associations adopts constitution as International Conference of Women's Christian Associations.

October 30. Young Women's Christian Association of Lenox College, Hopkinton, Iowa, organized.

Calisthenics taught in Boston Association by one of the boarders in the Warrenton Street Home.

1879 Domestic Training School and ladies' cooking classes opened in Boston Association.

1880 Public school cooking class in Boston Association.

Classes in phonography, typewriting, photo negative, photo coloring, and painting on china in New York City Association.

1881 October. Committee on Young Women's Christian Association work in colleges and seminaries appointed by the Sixth International Conference of Women's Christian Associations.

Beginning of work with teen-age girls, Oakland, Calif. Called "Little Girls' Christian Association."

St. Louis Association offers a public course of cooking lessons by Juliet Corson.

Technical design and free-hand enlarging taught in New York City Association.

1882 Boston Association sends class to Miss Allen's gymnasium.

Household Training School opened by St. Louis Association.

1883 Course of emergency lectures instituted by Boston Association.

Baltimore, Md., opens rooms adapted for noon lunch as prominent feature.

1884 Young Women's Christian Association of Pleasant Valley township, Johnson County, Iowa, organized.
February 7-11. First state Young Women's Christian Association organized at Albion, Mich., convention.
February 14-17. State Young Women's Christian Association of Ohio organized.
November 15. Iowa State Young Women's Christian Association organized.
December 8. Berkeley Street building, Boston Association, dedicated. Contained first Young Women's Christian Association gymnasium in America.

1885 Kalamazoo, Mich., Young Women's Christian Association organized.
Delegation from state Associations attends international conference of the Women's Christian Associations at Cincinnati.

1886 Lawrence, Kan., Young Women's Christian Association organized.
August 6-12. National Association of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States formed at Lake Geneva, Wis. (later the American Committee).

1887 First state secretaries in Iowa and Ohio.
Ypsilanti, Mich., Young Women's Christian Association organized.
Topeka, Kan., Young Women's Christian Association organized.
Exhibits of class work in millinery and dressmaking held in Philadelphia Association.
Calisthenics taught in New York City, Philadelphia and Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Associations.
Self-governing club organized by Miss Grace Dodge in the Baltimore Association.

1888 St. Joseph, Mo., Young Women's Christian Association organized.
Scranton, Pa., Young Women's Christian Association organized.
Young Women's Christian Association Quarterly pub-

lished by the National Committee of Young Women's Christian Associations.

Physical education in Worcester, Mass., Scranton, Pa., Coldwater, Mich., and Newburgh, N. Y.

Current events class held in Worcester Association.

Advanced classes in cutting and fitting held by New York City Association.

Boston Association opens School of Domestic Science.

1889 Constitution of the "National" Association of Young Women's Christian Associations changed to "International" to admit Associations in the British Provinces.

First national gathering of secretaries at Bloomington, Ill.

Young Women's Christian Association Quarterly changes name to the *Evangel.*

1890 Kansas City, Mo., Young Women's Christian Association organized.

Toledo, Ohio, Young Women's Christian Association organized.

Trained attendants' class opened in Brooklyn, N. Y., Association.

1891 Summer school at Bay View, Mich.

Minneapolis, Minn., Young Women's Christian Association organized.

International Conference reorganized into the International Board of Women's Christian Associations.

Cafeteria system introduced into the Kansas City Association.

1892 Preliminary meeting of World's Young Women's Christian Association in London, England.

Busy Girls' Half Hour established by Dayton Association in the National Cash Register works.

1893 International Board of Women's Christian Associations becomes the International Board of Women's and Young Women's Christian Associations.

1894 World's Young Women's Christian Association organized in London. Miss Annie M. Reynolds of the United States called as secretary.

April. The *International Messenger*, official organ of the International Board, first issued.
Miss Agnes Hill, first secretary on foreign field, goes to India.
Toledo Association raises support for foreign secretary.
Harlem, N. Y., Association clubs organized—"Birthday Building," "Literary" and "Annex Choral."

1895 Affiliation of student Associations with World's Student Christian Federation.
Industrial extension work begun in Milwaukee, Wis., Association, Maude Wolff, secretary.

1897 Boston Association offers courses for Young Women's Christian Association secretaries.

1898 First world conference of Young Women's Christian Association—London.
First county Association organized, Fillmore County, Minn.

1899 International Committee of Young Women's Christian Associations becomes the American Committee of Young Women's Christian Associations, releasing Canada.
American Department of the World's Committee created.

1901 Headquarters opened by International Board at Chautauqua, N. Y., Assembly Grounds.
Milwaukee includes a model housekeeping apartment in its new building.

1902 Second world conference of Young Women's Christian Association—Geneva.
Division of student and city conferences at Silver Bay, N. Y.

1903 The *Bulletin* replaces the *International Messenger* as official organ of the International Board.
Headquarters opened by the International Board at the Southern Chautauqua, Monteagle, Tenn.
Industrial work opened in mill villages of South Carolina.

1904 Secretaries Training Institute opened in Chicago, Ill.

Miss Clarissa Spencer becomes secretary of the World's Young Women's Christian Association.

1905 May 24. Manhattan conference considers union of the two national bodies.

November 2-7. Eighteenth Biennial Conference of the International Board votes for union, Baltimore.

Swimming taught in pool in Buffalo and in Montgomery, Ala.

1906 Third world conference of Young Women's Christian Association—Paris.

January 2-4. Special convention of the American Committee Associations, at Chicago, votes in favor of union.

The two national organizations come together to form one body, the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America.

December. First convention, held in New York City.

December 7. Miss Grace H. Dodge elected president of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations.

1907 Territorial form of organization adopted in several sections.

First issue of the new official organ of the National Board, the *Association Monthly*.

Studio Club of New York City opens rooms.

1908 The Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America occupies new headquarters.

October 17. Woodford County, Ill., Association organized.

First Federation of Industrial Clubs formed in Detroit.

National Training School opened in New York City.

1909 Organization of the Employed Officers Association.

Second National Convention of the national organization—St. Paul, Minn.

1910 International Institute, first Young Women's Christian Association work with foreign-speaking women, started in New York City.

Fourth world conference of Young Women's Christian Association—Berlin.

Central Club for Nurses established in New York City.

1911 Third National Convention—Indianapolis, Ind.

Course in "First Aid to the Injured" prepared in cooperation with the American Red Cross Society.

Dr. Anna M. Brown starts an investigation into the physical welfare of women of the mill villages of the South.

1912 New headquarters building for the national organization opened at 600 Lexington Avenue, New York City, containing offices and training school.

Camp Fire Girls movement developed by the Young Women's Christian Association.

1913 Fourth National Convention—Richmond, Va.

National conference grounds opened at Asilomar, Calif.

1914 Fifth world conference of Young Women's Christian Association—Stockholm.

1915 Fifth National Convention—Los Angeles, Calif.

Headquarters and club house erected by the National Board on the Panama-Pacific International Exposition grounds at San Francisco, Calif.

Work begun for immigrants in the town and country.

1916 Every Member Jubilee celebrating fiftieth anniversary of the first American Young Women's Christian Association (Boston).

First summer conference for colored girls, held at Atlanta, Ga.

Opening of Hollywood Studio Club for girls in the motion picture industry.

1917 National Board organizes War Work Council.

First conference of International Institutes, Pittsburgh.

Organization of Overseas Committee of War Work Council, for work in Europe.

1918 Conference of one hundred business and professional women—New York City.

1919 Various types of work with adolescent girls in the Young Women's Christian Association brought to-

gether into one movement, the Girl Reserves of the Young Women's Christian Association.
Meeting in St. Louis to organize the National Federation of Business and Professional Women.
First national industrial conference, Washington, D.C.
International Conference of Women Physicians, called by the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States and held at national headquarters, New York City.
Young Women's Christian Association work begun in Canal Zone.

1920 Sixth National Convention—Cleveland. Endorsement of the Social Ideals of the Churches.
First Student Assembly, in connection with national convention.

1921 Dodge Hotel opened in Washington, D.C.

1922 Seventh National Convention—Hot Springs, Ark.
National Student Council organized.
First National Assembly of Industrial Girls, Hot Springs, in connection with the convention.
First issue of the *Womans Press*, national monthly magazine taking the place of the *Association Monthly*.

1924 Eighth National Convention—New York City.
First National Assembly of Business and Professional Women, in connection with the national convention, New York City.
World's Young Women's Christian Association committee meeting held at Washington, D.C.

1926 Ninth National Convention—Milwaukee.
New building of Hollywood Studio Club opened.

1928 Tenth National Convention—Sacramento, Calif.
Sixth world conference of Young Women's Christian Association—Budapest. An industrial and a business girl included in official delegation from the United States.

1930 Eleventh National Convention—Detroit, Mich.
November. National conference held at New York City to consider emergency created by the unemployment situation, particularly as it affects women.

1932 Twelfth National Convention—Minneapolis.
Celebration of twenty-fifth anniversary of forming of present national organization.

1934 Thirteenth National Convention—Philadelphia.
Separate organization formed—the National Institute of Immigrant Welfare.

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